

THE DOLLAR MAGAZINE;

A LITERARY, POLITICAL, ADVERTISING, AND MISCELLANEOUS NEWSPAPER.

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CONTENTS OF No. 5.—Girard College.—Removal of the Deposits.—Ella of Garveloch, by Miss Martineau.

VOL. I.

OCTOBER 12, 1833.

NO. V.

THE GIRARD COLLEGE.

A great deal of excitement now prevails in Philadelphia, upon the subject of this College. As an election for City Councils is about to take place, it is a matter of course that this excitement should be abused and increased for party purposes. It is however a perfectly just ground for praise or censure of the existing city government, and of course affords (with other matters) good reason for keeping them in office or for turning them out, as the case may be.

We look at this matter without any prejudice against the present Councils, for we know the name of but one member, and for him we have respect. We know the name of only one of the trustees of the College and that one deservedly carries much authority with it:—and furthermore, we know nothing of the principles or persons of those who are proposed as successors to the present city government. We can therefore have no view to any effect upon the election when we state some of our opinions upon a matter which has engaged us heart and mind.

When the *former* Councils advertised for a *plan* of the College building, we had a mind to copy so much of the will as *prescribes* the plan and send it to them.

Were not the will imperative as to the plan of the building, we should choose one of much less expense, especially as it is not to be built upon the city lot originally chosen, but upon the farm (so much more extensive) finally fixed upon by the testator.

The plan determined upon by the Councils will cost half a million of dollars more than Mr. Girard's plan—perhaps still more.

Rather late in the question an assertion has been made that it is impossible to construct the building in the manner laid down in the will. If this be true, it should have been the very first act of the persons in authority to prove this in such a manner as to leave no doubt on the subject. They have not taken this course; not even, if we remember rightly, have they given the name of a single architect who will hazard his reputation upon the assertion. And they may depend upon it, that until they bring forward full evidence upon this point, the community will not believe that Mr. Girard, who built so many houses, would prescribe a plan, the execution of which is impossible.

Supposing for a moment that the original design cannot be carried into effect, ought not the will to be, as near as may be, followed in the building? Does any man believe (we do not believe there is one in the city who does) that Mr. Girard would have approved of the costly colonnade which is to obstruct the light and shut out the air from the College? To prove that he *would*, reference has been made to his own banking house! the front of which had a few Corinthian pillars. Now every body knows that *that* house was bought of the old bank of the United States, after the expiration of its charter—and the whole cost of it was only about one-tenth of the proposed cost of the College.

As the whole legacy passes from the city to the state of Pennsylvania, if the will be not complied with—ought not the

Councils, in common prudence, if they find it impracticable to execute the will exactly, to obtain the consent of the state to the necessary alterations?

As to the arguments in favour of having a beautiful and noble building; a model of correct and classic architecture; and against the plan of the will as disgraceful to a community possessing any architectural taste, as a lasting monument of want of taste, &c. &c. &c. they are all wide of the question.

To this subject we mean to return in our next number.

Since the foregoing remarks were written, the election for the City Councils has taken place, and the incumbents have been re-elected by a very small majority. We hope they will not consider this election as a proof of the opinion of the public in favour of the plan which has been chosen for the building of the College. Many persons thought this but one against many overbalancing considerations—and we heard one person say, that "the more money there should be *wasted* on the building, the less would remain for doing mischief with."

For our part, we believe that this legacy may be the means of educating several thousand children at a time, in the very best manner. It may be perverted or wasted, and if so, it were better that it had never been accepted by the city.

We call upon the Councils now to *prove* that it is impracticable to execute the will in building the College.

REMOVAL OF THE DEPOSITS FROM THE UNITED STATES BANK.

The President's course in this matter, has made the question of the recharter of the Bank the present leading measure of the administration. No member of Congress, who wishes to obtain office by servility, will give a vote in favour of the Bank.

It was probably in order to bring the whole weight of his influence against the Bank, that the President took so strong a measure, against the opinion of the majority of his Cabinet.

It has been urged that the change of the deposits will produce great distress in the mercantile community. But as they will still be in the country, and still be lent out, it is difficult to see why they may not be as usefully employed as before. It is true that in many cases they will be lent to a different set of people, and the mere change will produce distress among those who are suddenly deprived of an accommodation, the *gradual* lessening of which is necessary to their circumstances. We believe that the forbearance which has been shown by the Bank of the United States to its debtors has eventually saved many a debt to the Bank, and many a man from ruin.

We do not believe the Bank of the United States *necessary* for carrying into effect the power conferred upon the general government by the constitution—and of course we do not think there is any constitutional authority for the charter of the Bank. But as it is now in existence, and as there has grown up into custom a most flagrant violation of an express prohibition of the constitution, which takes away from the several states the power of coining money, or of issuing paper money (we allude to the issue of paper by means of state banks which *buy*

of the states a power which *they* do not lawfully possess)—we should be cautious how we permit our only check upon the cupidity of the state banks to be taken away—before we have some security that their power of meddling with the currency is about to be removed.

It is monstrous that a sovereign power, which reaches in its influence to every buyer and seller, should be delegated to half a dozen irresponsible men—with a capital of fifty or a hundred thousand dollars.

It is the interest of the Bank of the United States, that the money matters of all parts of the country should be preserved in a sound state. It is the interest of each petty Bank to extend the issue of its own notes as far as it can possibly be done, and this without regard to the general safety.

Through the Bank of the United States the general government exercises its undoubted right of supplying the currency. It were indeed much better if it would do so without the intervention of a corporation.

We disapprove of the change of the deposits; do not think them safe in the state banks; and think they will stimulate the state banks to an increased activity in mischief.

But if the power of issuing paper money were taken from the state banks, and were exercised by the United States—the state banks would be safe places of deposit. The danger arises entirely from the exercise of a power by the state banks, which the states could not exercise themselves.

Is it too late to make a change in this matter? The states now gain a miserable *bonus* in return for the grant of a monopoly which is more injurious to their citizens than a monopoly of the trade to the Indies would be.

If the plan for a national currency, which was proposed in the first number of this work, could be carried into effect, and the states were to create banks of discount and deposit upon corresponding principles—the whole profit of supplying the currency would go to the states, instead of being scrambled for by a thousand stock-jobbing banks; and mercantile operations would be based upon a safe and pure circulating medium.

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Kirkstall Abbey,	Turner	Bromley	75
Okehampton Castle,	Turner	Turner	75
Totness, on the river Dart,	Turner	Turner	75

ELLA OF GARVELOCH.

A TALE.

By HARRIET MARTINEAU.

CHAPTER I.

LANDLORD AND TENANT.

Among the islands which are clustered around the western shore of Argyleshire, there is a small chain called the Garveloch isles, or the Isles of Rough Rock. There are four of them, divided from the coast of Lorn by a tossing sea, and by scattered islands larger than themselves; and from each other by narrow sounds, studded with rocks, and difficult to navigate, on account of the force of their currents. This difficulty would have placed the inhabitants nearly out of reach of intercourse with those of the mainland, even if that intercourse had been desired by either party; but it was not, at the date of our narrative, for they knew and cared little about each other. The islanders, consisting of only a few families scattered over Garveloch, (the principal of the group, which therefore gives its name to the whole,) thought of nothing but providing as they could for themselves alone; and their place of habitation was so wild and dreary that it presented no attractions to visitors. Garveloch was the only inhabited island of the four; Ilachanu, the westernmost and next largest, being a desert of rocks and moorland; and the easternmost, considerably smaller, not having even yet received the poor distinction of a name.

The length of Garveloch is about a mile and a half; but its dwellers were, in the days of our tale, as little acquainted with each other's concerns as if a chain of mountains had divided the north-eastern from the south-western parts of the island. The difficulties which lay in the way of their intercourse were so great from the nature of the land,—it being divided by steep rocks into cliffs and narrow valleys which were almost impassable,—that the rare communication which did take place was by coasting when the weather was calm enough to render the Sound safe for the crazy boats and small skill of the islanders. These boats were but two; one belonging to a farmer who cultivated his sandy fields on the southernmost and sunniest part of the land, and the other to the family of a fisherman who had tenanted a good cottage and croft on the shore some way higher up. These boats were borrowed as they were wanted; and the intercourse of lending and receiving back again was all that ever took place, except on the rare occasions of a marriage, a birth, or a funeral, or the still rarer one of a visit from the proprietor. These visits averaged about one in the life-time of each laird; for if it chanced that any one of the race was so fond of the wildest kind of scenery, or so addicted to any pursuit in which the productions of these islands could assist him, as to show his face a second time to his amazed tenantry, it as often happened that another was kept away entirely by the reports of those who had no love of dreary lands and perilous waters.

There are traces in all the islands of times when they had been more frequented; of times when the first introduction of a new faith into this remote region was followed up by rites which must have given to it an aspect of civilization which it had now long lost. Tombs of gray stone, with a cross at the head of each, are conspicuous here and there; and in the most secluded parts are mouldering walls which seem to have formed hermitages in the olden times. If these establishments were, as is most probable, connected with the cathedral of Iona, it seems strange that so great a celebrity as they must have obtained should have died away. There is not so much as one tradition, however obscure, among the inhabitants, respecting these relics, and they therefore afford the less interest to the traveller, who can only look at the remains and go away as wise as he came.

There was once a laird, however, who was not

willing to give up the whole matter as a mystery without examination. He came again and again, sometimes attended only by his steward, and sometimes by strangers as curious as himself. He destroyed the average we have spoken of, greatly to the joy of his island tenantry, and to the annoyance of the old steward who had the charge of this range of islands, together with many more in the neighboring seas, and who much preferred talking big in the name of the laird, and doing what he pleased among the people, to following his principal in his excursions, standing by to hear the statements of the tenantry, and receiving directions concerning their affairs.

Notice of a visit from the laird was sometimes given and sometimes not, according as Callum, the steward, happened to be in Garveloch or elsewhere. He had an apartment of his own at the farm above mentioned, which he occupied sometimes for a few days together; and which was therefore better furnished with accommodations than any other space between four walls in the island. The convenience of having this apartment prepared in case of the weather being too boisterous to permit a return on the same day to the mainland, induced the proprietor to send notice, when Callum was on the spot to make arrangements. When he was not, such notice served no purpose, as the people at the farm had no power to levy supplies, and would not have known how to use them when procured, so uncivilized were their habits and manners. On one occasion, the omission of such notice caused the laird to witness a sight which he had never before beheld in all its simplicity,—a funeral among his tenants.

As the bark which contained himself and a party of friends approached Garveloch, one fine spring morning, he saw two boats nearing the landing-place before them. As these vessels were rocked in the surf, snatches of a hoarse and wild music came from them, rising above the roar and dash of the waves. The sound was not that of any instrument, but of the rough voices of men, and it ceased when the labors of landing began. This was done with all possible awkwardness, confusion and noise, and then the companies of the two boats took their way up the rocks without perceiving the laird's vessel, which was still at a considerable distance. Some of the men bore on their shoulders the body about to be interred, and the rest followed at their own pace, not forming themselves into any order of march, or seeming to be united by any common object. The last of the stragglers disappeared behind a projection of the rock while the laird was preparing to be carried through the surf by two of his boatmen. He pointed out to them, with great exactness, the spot where they should land the rest of the party when they should return from Ilachanu to join him at dinner, and then took his way alone in the track of the funeral party.

He reached the burying-ground just as the ceremony was concluded; for funerals in the Highlands are hurried over with an apparent negligence and levity which shock the feelings of those who have been accustomed to the solemnity which such a service seems fitted to inspire. The only solemnity here arose from the desolation of the place. It was unenclosed, so that the wild cattle had gone over it, defacing the tombstones and cropping the coarse herbage which grew more plentifully here than elsewhere. Thistles and docks appeared where there were some traces of a path, and the fragments of broken crosses lay as rubbish beside the newly-dug grave. The laird looked among the group for the mourners. They were easily distinguished by their countenances, though they shed no tears and spoke no word. They were three boys, the two elder of whom were strong, ruddy, well-grown youths, apparently of the ages of sixteen and fourteen. The third was either some years younger, or was made to look so by his smallness of size and delicacy of appearance. He fixed the attention of the laird at once by the signs of peculiarity about him. His restlessness of eye and of manner was unlike that which arises in children from animal spirits, and contrasted strangely with the lost and melancholy expression of his countenance. His brothers seemed not to forget him for a moment, sometimes holding him by the hand to prevent his wandering from them, sometimes passing an arm round his neck to control his restlessness, sometimes speaking to him in the caressing tone which they would use to an infant. The laird, learning from some who passed out of the burying-ground that these boys were orphans, and had been attending the funeral of their father, determined to learn more about them from themselves.

'You three are brothers, I find. Which of you is the eldest?'

'I am two years older than Fergus,' answered Ronald, 'and Archie is twelve, though he looks less.'

'And have you any brothers and sisters younger than you, Archie?' inquired the laird.

Archie looked in the gentleman's face for a moment, and then away again.

'He speaks to nobody but us,' said Ronald. 'He heeds no other voice,—that is, no man's or woman's voice. He knows the low of the cattle and the cry of the sea-fowl when a storm is coming. He wants to be down among the rocks now, ye see. We're going, Archie, we're going. Stay a minute.—He's not like us, your honor sees.'

'I see, I see. He looks quite lost.'

'To a stranger,' said Fergus, 'but not to us. We know his ways so well that we can always guide him, except when he is at the highest and lowest, and then it is best to leave him to himself till the fit is over.'

'He must require a great deal of watching; is there no one to take care of him but you?'

'He takes to no folly, only to sport, Sir; and he is wiser than we about many things, and sees farther. He is always housed before a tempest, or safe in a hole in the rock, like the birds he seems to learn from, while we breast the wind as we may, far from home. When he is dull or low, Ella takes better care of him than we could do. She just puts fresh heather under him and sings, and he sleeps sometimes many days together.'

'And who is Ella?'

'Our sister, your honor; our elder sister. She is down by the boats, and she will be glad to see your honor, for we have much to say to you or to Mr. Callum. Where will your honor please to see Ella?'

'We will walk down to the boats, Ronald; or, if your sister should wish to speak with me more privately, perhaps she will come up here.'

Ronald cast a hurried look at the new-made grave, and then said to Fergus,

'Run down, Fergus, and ask Ella to come up to the cross yonder. The laird will wait for her there, and let Archie go with you; he is in a hurry for the shore.'

During the few minutes that they waited at the cairn or heap of stones in which the cross was planted, the laird learned from his companion something of the domestic circumstances of this orphan family. Their mother had died at Archie's birth, and their father had been growing infirm for many years, so that almost the whole charge of the family had rested upon Ella since she had been old enough to support it. Her brother praised her only by stating facts; but these facts conveyed an impression that she must be a woman of extraordinary energy, and one who deserved all the respect and love with which her brothers could regard her. It was very natural that, while listening to a tale of peculiar interest concerning her, the laird should picture her to himself as corresponding in outward appearance to the elevated idea which was given him of her character; and it was with some disappointment that he looked upon her for the first time. She appeared as much older than she really was, as Archie looked younger. She might have been taken for his mother, though she was, in fact, no more than five-and-twenty. Tall and gaunt in person, and thinking as little of adornment in dress as her countrywomen in general, on ordinary occasions, there was nothing at first sight to attract a stranger. Her feet were bare, according to the universal custom; her hair, unconfined by any cap, hanging down from under the plaid which she had drawn over her head, the plaid itself strapped round her in preparation for rowing her boat home, she looked so unlike the maidens of a civilized country, that the laird, well as he knew his own tenantry, was startled. When he looked again, however, and observed the strong expression of her eye, and of her weather-stained features, when he remembered what toils she had undergone, and that her heart was now troubled and striving with natural grief, he felt that he was wrong in expecting softness where it was not to be found.

'Have you anything to say to me, Ella; any complaint to make?'

'No complaint your honor. Murmurs will not heal the grief of this day, and other troubles are nothing. I only wished to speak to your honor about the lads and myself; how we are to live, and what to do.'

'Well; have you settled what you wish? and is there difficulty with Callum, or any body else?'

'Your honor knows our farm, where we have liv-

ed till now. Mr. Callum has given notice whenever he found my father ill, that we must quit at his death. So we are going to quit.

'And what else would you do? Your brothers are not old enough to manage a farm.'

'Mr. Callum is right, doubtless; and I have no desire to keep on what we could not keep up. As for where we are to go,—we should be quite easy in mind, if your honor would order the place down below to be made weather-tight for us and fix a rent upon it. Your honor would not ask more than we could pay.'

'What, that half-ruined cottage in the bay, with the croft behind it? How could you live there? There is not a fence complete, and not an ear of barley has grown there these many years.'

'Your honor would have the fences mended at the same time with the cottage; and there is the fishing to depend on, as well as the ground, and the rocks shelve conveniently there for the weed, and Ronald could sell kelp when I sell fish; and Fergus could bring us in peat,—and as for Archie, the nearer the sea, the happier he is. So I hope your honor will let us try the place.'

'It is a wretched place, Ella. I think we might find something better for you. There are patches of richer soil in the vallies. Surely you had better settle in a more sheltered situation. The wind will blow away your soil and seed together, before it has time to strike root.'

We cannot go out of sight of the sea, on Archie's account, sir.

'He would never be happy between green hills,' added Fergus. 'We should ever be missing him from home, and finding him in the old places: but if we settle on the beach, he will not be tempted to stray.'

'Though he could not stray very far, your honor, I am easier to have him under my eye, which might be if I lived by fishing.'

That is scarcely a woman's business, Ella. It brings toil and hardship to the strongest men.'

'It is my business, your honor; and it is not the blackest night, nor the stormiest day that can weary me, thanks to Him that gives strength where it is wanted. Would you be pleased to grant me what I ask, and let me know with your own lips, what the rent shall be?'

'Let us go to the place, and see what it looks like.'

While they proceeded down the steep to the beach, Ella leading the way, the laird marked her stern demeanor and masculine gait, and could not fancy her singing her idiot brother to sleep, and couching him on fresh heather. Presently, however, his idea of her was amended. Archie came sauntering along the shore to join them, and yet with every appearance of not observing them. He held a bunch of sea-bird's feathers, which he thrust into Ella's hand without looking at her, but glanced back when he had passed, as if to see what had become of them. Ella had thrown back the plaid and stuck them in her hair, where they remained till he was out of sight, when she threw them away and resumed her plaid.

'The people at the farm are relations of yours, I think, Ella.'

'They are fourth cousins of my mother's; and disposed to be kind to us for her sake: and that is another reason for our settling here.'

'But what will they think of such a dreary place in comparison with their barley and oat fields, to say nothing of the house, with two rooms, each as large as this cottage, besides Callum's apartment?'

'It is what we think that matters most.'

'Very true. Now show me the boundaries that you would mark out if you had your choice.'

'The rent will mark the boundary best: but we should like, besides this field; to have the slope of the hill behind for our pony to graze on. We must have the pony to carry the weed, and to draw the harrow, in case of my being out at sea at the time. And I should like to take in a corner of the peat moss yonder; that is all we wish for behind. Then Ronald must be free to cut weed some way along these ledges to the left: they shelve better than those on the other hand. Then the cottage should be new roofed, and the fence put up; and your honor will name the rent.'

'You shall not be pressed for that, Ella. It would not be reasonable, in a situation like this.'

'I hope your honor sees we beg no favor,' replied Ella. 'Ask Mr. Callum, and he will tell you our rent has ever been ready, whether we feasted or fasted: and ready it shall be, if it be God's will to let the sea and land yield us their own.'

'Better to fast and pay, than feast and owe,' said Fergus.

'Right, very right, Fergus. Well; you shall have your way; and I will consult with Callum about the rent, and have the place made ready as quickly as possible. Here he is. Let one of the lads come up to me at the farm, an hour or two hence, and I will name the rent; meantime, you can join your friends.'

Instead of going towards the boats, however, Ella slowly proceeded up the rocks, in the direction of the burying-ground. The lads looked as if they would fain have stayed to listen; but a glance from their sister sent Fergus to look for Archie, and Ronald to join the little funeral party, who were carousing as if it had been a wedding.

'There will be tears in those eyes within these few minutes, if there is nobody nigh,' said Callum, looking after Ella as he came up. 'They have held tears, for as dry as they seem. Since her father began to fail, I, for one, have seen heart-drops, though she would have had me think it was but the wintry wind.'

'She has a proud spirit, Callum.'

'Proud! Her pride ill becomes one that lives under your honor, and it is more than I know how to master. There is no bringing her down; and if she puts her spirit into her brothers, they will be beyond my reach quite.'

'How do you mean, Callum? Why should you bring them down?'

'Only to make them like others that live under such as you,—grateful and humble, and ready to obey.'

'To obey your pleasure, I suppose. No Callum, there has been far too much servile obedience among the lower orders of our people, one sign of which is their revengeful and turbulent temper. If they were less ready to watch our pleasure in matters that do not concern them, they would do fewer deeds that call for revenge, and have fewer causes of quarrel. This proud woman, as we call her, has a peaceable temper, I hope and believe.'

'Peaceable enough, your honor, or I own I should have picked a quarrel with her before now, for I do not like her any more than I fancy she likes me. But there has never been occasion for any words; for out comes the pouch as sure as I show myself to gather the rent; and there is the dinner and the whiskey on the table for me to take or leave, as I like. She never kept me waiting, or stinted her hospitality, or got into a quarrel with her neighbors that I could take hold of.'

'Then for what, in the name of wonder, Callum, would you have her be grateful and ready to obey? I never did her any service that I am aware of, (though I hope to do some yet,) and I know of no title to her obedience that either you or I can urge. Can you tell me of any?'

Callum stared, while he asked if one party was not landlord and the other tenant.

'You are full of our Scotch prejudices, I see. Callum, as I was once. Only go into England, and you will see that landlord and tenant are not master and slave, as we in the Highlands have ever been apt to think. In my opinion, their connexion stands thus,—and I tell it you, that you may take care not to exact an obedience which I am far from wishing to claim from my tenants,—the owner and occupier of a farm, or other estate, both wish to make gain, and for this purpose unite their resources. He who possesses land wishes to profit by it without the trouble of cultivating it himself; he who would occupy has money, but no land to lay it out upon, so he pays money for the use of the land, and more money for the labor which is to till it; (unless he supplies the labor himself.) His tillage should restore him his money with gain. Now why should the notion of obedience enter into a contract like this?'

'I only know,' replied Callum, 'that in my young days, if the laird held up a finger, any one of his people who had offended him would have been thrown into the sea.'

'Such tyranny, Callum, had nothing to do with their connexion as landlord and tenant, but only with their relation as chieftain and follower. You have been at Glasgow, I think?'

'Yes; a cousin of mine is a master in the shawl-manufacture there.'

'Well; he has laborers in his employment there, and they are not his slaves, are they?'

'Not they; for they sometimes throw up their work when he wants them most.'

'And does he hold his warehouse by lease, or purchase?'

'He rents it of Bailie Billie, as they call him, who is so fierce on the other side in politics.'

'If your cousin does not obey his landlord in political matters, (for I know how he has spoken at public meetings,) why should you expect my tenants to obey me, or rather you—for I never ask their obedience? The Glasgow operative, and the Glasgow capitalist, make a contract for their mutual advantage; and if they want further help, they call in another capitalist to afford them the use of a warehouse which he lets for his own advantage. Such a mutual compact I wish to establish with my people here. Each man of them is usually a capitalist and laborer in one, and in order to make their resources productive, I, a landholder, step in as a third party to the production required; and if we each fulfil our contract, we are all on equal terms. I wish you would make my people understand this; and I require of you, Callum, to act upon it yourself.'

The steward made no reply, but stood thinking how much better notions of dignity the old laird had, and how much power he possessed over the lives and properties of his tenants.

'Did this croft pay any rent before it was let out of cultivation?' inquired the laird.

'No, your honor; it only just answered to the tenant to till it, and left nothing over for rent; but we had our advantage in it too; for then yon barley field paid a little rent; but since this has been let down, that field has never done more than pay the tillage. But we shall have rent from it again when the lease is renewed, if Ella makes what I expect she will make of this croft.'

'Is there any kelp prepared hereabouts, Callum?'

'Not any; and indeed there is no situation so fit for it as this that Ronald is to have. There is nothing doing in Garveloch that pays us anything, except at the farm.'

'Well then, Ella can, of course, pay nothing at first but for the use of the cottage, and the benefit of the fences, &c. Is there any other capital laid out here?'

'Let us see. She has a boat of her own, and the boys will bring their utensils with them. I believe, sir, the house and fence will be all.'

'Very well: then calculate exactly what they are worth, and what more must be laid out to put them in good condition, and tell me; the interest of that much capital is all that Ella must pay, till we see what the bay and the little field will produce.'

The laird next gave particular directions what repairs should be made, and that there should be no delay in completing them, and then left Callum to make his estimate, bidding him follow to the farm when he had done.

CHAPTER II.

A HIGHLAND FARM.

There was such a bustle at the farm as had not been seen for many a day. At the first alarm of company landing, the girls of the family unyoked themselves from the harrow which they were drawing over the light, sandy soil, and hastened into the house, where their mother had already begun her preparations. One of them set about fanning the smouldering peat fire with the torn skirt of her woolen petticoat, while the other climbed upon the settle to take down one of the regiment of smoked geese which hung overhead from a pole, in somewhat the same kind of arrangement in which they had once winged their flight through the upper air. Lean, black, and coarse, the bird would have been little tempting to the appetite of a stranger; but as all the approaching company were not strangers, it stood a fair chance of being eaten with relish. The mother, while calling to one or another to bring out a cheese from the press, and barley cakes from the cupboard, was now engaged in bringing potatoes to light from under her own bed, and taking off the cream from pans which were hidden from common observation by a curtain of peat-smoke.

The goose being set to boil, and the potatoes ready to be put into the same pot in due time, (possibly, in order that the oil from the bird might save the trouble of buttering them when they came to table) the readiest of the two maidens hastened to exhibit the snow-white cloth of ancient home manufacture, which covered on rare festivals, the table in Callum's apartment. By the time it was spread out to view,

it displayed, besides all its varieties of pattern, a further diversity, not intended by the original designer. Here a streak of yellow oil imbibed from the goose; there a brush of mould from a potatoe; here a few harmless drops of cream, and there a corner dabbled in more fragrant whiskey, were all new for the occasion. The next thing to be done, was to unpack the baskets of provisions which, out of consideration for the stomachs of the strangers, had been sent in the boat by the laird's housekeeper. What jostling of helpers, what jingling of bottles, what spilling of everything that could be spilt, what soiling of all that was solid! It was well for those who were to eat, that they saw nothing of this household preparation; if they had, neither the fresh sea-breeze, nor the exercise they had taken, would have availed to give a relish to their meal. To beguile the impatience they began to feel for their dinner, some surveyed the farm, some seated themselves on a bench beside the door, to regale their eyes with the splendid view of sea and islands which presented itself; and these occasionally conversed with the farmer's sons,—two boys, who stood staring at a little distance, and were, after much perseverance, prevailed upon to speak.

'What is your name?' asked a lady of the younger boy.

He put three fingers in his mouth and stared, but made no reply: and it was some minutes before it appeared that his name was Rob.

'Well! now you have told me your own name, tell me the name of that island, that looks so black with the shadow of the cloud upon it.'

'That's Ilachanu.'

'No, no. Ilachanu lies the other way, and we have just come from it. Use your eyes, my man. How should you know which I mean if you stand with your back to it?'

'Its Garveloch, maybe.'

'Nay; this is Garveloch that we stand upon. One would think it had no name, by the little you know about it.'

'It has not any name,' cried the boy brightening.

'Well; why could not you say so before? Do you ever go there?'

'I have been there.'

'What do you go there for?'

'Father takes me in the boat.'

'And what do you do when you get there?'

'We go and then we come back again.'

'I suppose so: but do you fish, or get eggs, or visit your friends, or what?'

Rob laughed, stared, and then looked at his brother, who conveyed with some trouble that nobody lived there. The lady next tried to make something of him.

'What do you go to that desert island for, my lad?'

'Why was you wanting to know?'

'Only out of curiosity. If your errand there is a secret, say so, and I will not ask you.'

The boy laughed, and said they went sometimes for one thing and sometimes for another; and this was all that could be made out.—What was the distance? was the next question.

'It may be twelve mile.'

'Twelve! it cannot be so much surely.'

'Maybe 'tis five.'

'I do not believe it is more than two.'

'Indeed I'm thinking ye're right.'

'You do not seem to know much about the matter.'

'Indeed, I know nothing about it.'

And so forth, upon every subject started: nor did their father appear much more enlightened in his way.

'The cattle seem to have done your field a world of mischief,' observed an English gentleman, 'and no wonder, with such a pretence of a fence as that. How long has it been broken down?'

'Indeed I can't remember.'

'Not this year, or last,' said his landlord, 'for I remember advising you three seasons ago to make your boys clear the ground of these stones, which would have built up your wall presently.—You said you would, and I suppose you still mean to do it some day.'

'O aye, some day: and I have spoken to the lads many a time.'

'Speaking does not seem to have done much good.'

'Indeed your honor's right.'

'Set about it yourself, I advise you, and then perhaps they will work with you, if you can't prevail upon them by other means.'

'Maybe I will some day.'

'I see no stock except a shaggy pony or two, or the few black cattle on the moor there,' observed the English gentleman.

'There are both pigs and poultry, if you could find out where they are,' said the laird laughing.

The gentleman looked round in vain, and then applied to farmer Murdoch himself.

'Do ye think we've no more cattle than them?' asked he proudly. 'There are many more of the kind down below fishing.'

'Cattle fishing! What do you mean?'

'I just mean what I say,—the kine are getting fish for themselves in the pools below, and the pigs—'

The laird explained to his friend that all domestic animals, even horses, relish fish when their other food is poor of its kind; and that it is the custom of the native cattle to go down to the beach at low water, and help themselves out of the pools in which fish have been left by the retiring tide.

'Well, Murdoch; and your pigs and poultry,—where are they? Do your pigs live on wild ducks, and your fowls on sea-weed?'

'Na, na,' said Murdoch. 'Where should they be but yonder? Ye'll see them when ye go in to dinner.'

'What! in the house?'

'To be sure,' said the laird. 'As soon as you enter, the pig will run between your legs, and the fowls will perch on each shoulder, and then you will be asked where the poor beasts could be better. If ever accident should oblige you to sleep in a farm-house hereabouts, examine your bed lest a sucking-pig should have taken possession before you, and in the morning, look for eggs in your shoes before you slip your feet into them.—But see, you must make acquaintance with these domestics out of doors for once. Here comes the old grunter, and there are the fowls fluttering as if they liked the day-light no better than bats.'

In honor of the guests, the house was cleared of live stock, and their banishment was a sign that dinner was ready at last. The meal was conducted with tolerable decency, as in addition to the boatmen who waited on the guests, Callum had arrived to keep things in order, and do the honors of his apartment. By dint of swearing at one, flinging his Highland bonnet at another, and coaxing a third, he procured a change of trenchers, when his guests turned from fish to fowl, and thence to cheese. This change did not much matter to those who ate of the provisions of the farm-house, for everything had a smack of the sea. The cream was fishy, the cheese was fishy, and the barley bannocks themselves had a salt and bitter flavor as if they had been dipped in sea-water; so at least the English gentleman thought, remembering how the cattle fed, and having seen the land manured with sea-weed. As it was certainly pure fancy as far as the barley cakes were concerned, it might have been so in the other cases; but he turned with much greater relish to the provisions which had been brought from the mainland.

Ella arrived before the meal was over, and waited outside till the laird could speak with her. His first question, when he took his seat on the bench beside the door, and his tenant stood before him, was, what had made her brothers so unlike the boys within, and most of the other lads belonging to the islands? He knew that they had been early taught industry by their father's example; but who had instructed them to husband that industry, to make use of eyes, ears, and understanding as well as limbs? Who had made them intelligent and skilful, as well as laborious?

'How does your honor know they are so?' asked Ella, for once following the Highland fashion of answering one question by another.

'I saw at a glance that they were intelligent, and Ronald told me enough while we were waiting for you, to show that you know better how to live with a little than these cousins of yours with much. How did you all learn?'

'Did Ronald tell you about Angus?' asked Ella, her eye for the first time sinking under that of the laird.

'Merely that Angus taught you the management of a boat, as he had learned it in dangerous places abroad. Angus is a relation, I suppose, or only a friend?'

'A friend, and he taught us all many things that are little thought of here. My father ever said we should do well if we had Angus at hand to advise us.'

'I suppose he will come and advise you again.'

Ella, at such an important time as this. Will you not send for him? Can I carry any message to the mainland, for I hear that it was from over the water that he used to come.'

Ella answered in a somewhat stern voice, that if ever he came again it must be from over the water, for that he had been in foreign parts for five years, and nothing had been heard of him for long.

'Five years! then he could not have taught her brothers much, so young as they must have been when he went away.' Ella replied that he taught her whatever her father could not, and her brothers learned of her.

'Perhaps,' said the laird, 'if his friends expected to hear of him, something prevented his sending to them.'

'No doubt,' replied Ella.

'What do you imagine it could be, Ella?'

'Perhaps he is dead,' said she quietly, but still looking on the ground.

'You do not suppose he has forgotten his old friends? yet, such things do sometimes happen, Ella.'

She made no answer, and the laird saw by the deep color which made itself seen through her weather-worn complexion, that he had gone too far. He was very sorry; and now wondered at his own slowness in perceiving the true state of the case; but there was so little in her appearance to suggest the idea, and she seemed so wholly devoted to her brothers, that he had fancied the connexion with Angus one of pure friendship,—of that friendship which bears in the Highlands a character of warmth, simplicity, and familiarity, not very common in some other places.

To relieve Ella, the laird spoke immediately of business, relating what was to be done to make the cottage and field tenantable, and explaining to her hat, twenty shillings a year being the interest upon the capital laid out, twenty shillings a year was the sum he would take, if she thought she could pay it.—Ella had no doubt of it.

'Try it for a year,' said the laird, 'and then if either party is discontented, we can change our terms. I hope you will meet with no disturbance from any one, and that you may find all your little plans answer well, so that you may be able to pay rent whenever the time comes for neighbors to settle down beside you and increase the cost of the place you hold. That time will come, I give you warning; and when it comes, I hope you will be rich enough to meet it.'

'Surely, your honor, we hope to improve the land, and so to be able to pay more than for the fencing; but how are we to improve the sea, or the ledges where we cut weed?'

'You cannot improve them, Ella; but if you are in a more favorable situation than your neighbors for obtaining their produce, you must expect to pay for the advantage. If I were to ask a rent to-day for the fishing in your bay, neither you nor others would pay it; you would say "I will go to some other situation as good, where there is no rent to pay," and you would settle yourself down in Ilachanu or elsewhere, and keep all you could obtain. But when all these best situations are taken possession of, other comers say to me, "we will pay you a part of what we get if you will let us have a line of shore that shelves conveniently for our kelping, or where fish is plentiful."'

'And then,' said Ella, 'we must pay as much as they offer, if we mean to stay; or take up with a worse situation if we will not pay. Well; I doubt not we can pay your honor duly when that time comes, over and above the twenty shillings for the house and fences. It may be in fish or kelp, instead of money, but we will manage to pay, if Mr. Callum be not hard upon us.'

'I shall tell Callum to receive my interest in any shape that it may suit you best to pay it; in fish or in kelp, or in grain, or even in peat. This is but fair, considering how far you are from any market. As for the real rent, do not trouble your head about that at present. It will be long before you will be called on for any; and I only mention it to show you what you have to expect if you grow rich.'

'Will our growing rich make us liable to pay what your honor calls real rent? You will excuse my asking, but I like to know what is before us.'

'Your growing rich will tempt people to come and try their fortune; and then, as I said, the best situations must pay for being the best. Is not this fair?'

'To be sure; your honor would not ask any thing unfair.'

'That is not enough, Ella: If there should be a

new laird by that time—

'God forbid!' exclaimed Ella. 'A new laird would not come to Garveloch in this way, like your honor, or listen to what your people have to say.'

'But answer me,' said the laird, smiling, 'Would you object to pay rent, in the case I speak of, whoever might be laird?'

'Surely no,' replied Ella, 'unless I could better myself by moving; which I could not do if all situations as good as my own were taken up.'

'And how much would you be willing to pay?'

'Let's see. If we had over and above, at the end of the year, two barrels of herrings and half a ton of kelp, we'll say,—I would find out how much we should have over and above, in the same time, in the next best place; and if it was one barrel of herrings and a quarter of a ton of kelp, I would pay the difference,—that is one barrel of herrings and a quarter of a ton of kelp, rather than move.'

'Very right; and then you would be as well off in the one place as in the other. There would still be a fair profit on both.'

'And I am sure your honor would not ask more than our profits would come to.'

'There would be little use in my asking, even if I wished it, Ella; for it would not be paid. Your neighbor would not settle beside you, unless the place answered to him; and if I demanded more of you than the difference between your profits and his, you would, of course, move to a situation like his.'

'I should be sorry to move,' said Ella, looking down towards her new place of abode, 'but, in such a case, I must.'

'Such a case will not occur, Ella; for we are not so foolish as to let our farms and cottages stand empty from our asking more rent than they can pay.'

'I am not afraid, sir, of having to give up our place. Whenever there is a rent, it will be small at first, I suppose.'

'Yes, and it will grow very slowly in a wild place like this, and it may be years before it bears any at all. In the meanwhile, tell your brothers what I have been telling you.'

Ella promised, and then proceeded to the one thing more she had to say. It was a request on Archie's behalf,—a petition that he might amuse himself as he pleased upon the Storr, a high rock, formed like a pyramid, that stood out from one point in the bay in which Ella's cottage stood. This rock was an island at high water, being joined to Garveloch only by a strip of sand, which was overflowed twice every day. Myriads of sea-birds haunted this rock; and Archie having once found his way to these, his favorite companions, could not, his sister believed, be kept from going continually. The laird gave ready permission, only offering a caution against the perils of the tide, rising and falling as it did perpetually in the very path. Of this, Ella had no fear; for not the most skilful seaman could be more cautious, or appear more knowing than Archie, when he had to do with the tide. His sister observed that he had never put life or limb in the way of peril; and this caution, so peculiar to children in Archie's state, went far to confirm the island superstition that the poor boy was under special invisible protection, and therefore screened from ill usage at the hand of man, as well as from natural perils.

The Storr being yielded to Archie as freely as the rocks to Ronald and the peat-moss to Fergus, Ella's business was done, and her gratitude secured,—gratitude offered as soon as deserved, and in greater abundance than the laird thought the occasion required, however Mr. Callum might complain of the absence of this prime qualification of a tenant. Ella's gratitude was not eloquent, but the laird saw enough of its effects upon her countenance and manner to wonder at the degree of satisfaction caused by the present arrangement. He kindly bade Ella farewell, and while she rapidly descended the rocks by one path, he sought his party by another.

He found his companions in great consternation, and the boatmen looking about on the beach, as if for something which had been dropped. What were they looking for,—a bracelet, a brooch; or was it a watch? Ornaments and valuables should not be trusted abroad on such expeditions.—O it was nothing of that kind; it was the boat they were looking for! The boat! and did they expect to find it among the shingles, or hidden under the sea-weeds? Who had drawn it up on the beach, or moored it in the cove? Nobody could lay claim to the praise of such a service; the boat had been left to itself, and had, of course, drifted down the Sound with the tide, and was probably dashed to pieces. While the responsible persons were bandying reproaches, the

English gentleman began to anticipate the fate he had been warned of,—a pig for his pillow, and eggs in his shoes, if indeed he could hope for the luxury of a bed, or of liberty to put off his clothes. The laird ordered the only measure now in their power,—to borrow the boat in which Ella and her brothers were about to return home. The farmer promised to house his relations for the night, and to send them back when his boat should return the next morning.

After waiting more than an hour, the people appeared at a great distance on the beach, bearing the boat instead of on the sea, being borne by the boat. The farmer explained that this was, perhaps, the shorter way, as the jutting rocks must have compelled them to make a wide circuit.

'Where are the oars?' said the laird, as they approached; whereupon they once more looked around them, saying, they thought the oars had been safe enough, though the boat was gone. It was not the case, however, and more messengers were despatched for Ella's oars. The ladies began to shiver and look at each other, when one of their companions observed, it would be terribly late and very dark before they could get home.

'Late, but not dark,' said the laird; 'you forget how long our twilight lasts. We shall be able to see our way till midnight.—Come, make haste with your stowage, my good man. But look here! how are you to row? The pins are out that should fix your oars.'

They had disappeared since morning, Fergus said, and he could not imagine how: he and his brother never pretended to row without, and it was not they who had loosened the pins. It was of more importance to supply the pins than to find who had taken them. Farmer Murdoch sent his boys to pull some teeth out of his wooden harrow, and, after another hour, they were fitted in, the boat launched with the ladies in it, and all apparently ready at last. No sooner, however, had the little vessel left the cove, than it was found to be a pity that there was no sail, as the wind seemed likely to be favorable, and might make up for lost time. In the midst of doubt and debate, the rowers put back, waving their bonnets to Murdoch and his party, who were ascending the rock.

'What's your will?' cried all on shore.

'A sail! a mast!' answered all in the boat. One went one way and another another, to find a pole for a mast, and a broomstick for the yard, and blankets to make a sail. There was no step for a mast, nor provision for a rudder; but no matter! The pole was tied with twine to one of the benches, and an oar was held at the helm, while the blankets were pinned together with wooden skewers, and managed by means of a scarlet garter tied to the corner, and thus transferred from the knee of one of the boatmen to his hand. The preparations being completed, the progress of the party was again watched by Ella, who anxiously observed the length of the shadows from the rocks upon the bay. When the boat emerged from the shadow and was caught by the wind, it appeared likely to be blown due north, and the party might have been landed very wide of their destination, if a little puff of wind had not carried the sail overboard, and obliged the men to take to their oars after all. It was evident, from there being no delay, that nobody was lost or injured, and farmer Murdoch was, therefore, at liberty to laugh when he saw his blankets, with their scarlet ornaments, gently floated down the sound, and seeming to excite the curiosity of the sea birds, which made a dip, in their evening flight homewards, to look at this new marine production.

CHAPTER III.

THE FIRST EXCURSION.

The laird's orders being too positive to be disobeyed, Ella and her brothers were permitted to enter their new dwelling by the time the herrings began to appear from the deep seas to the north. As Ella was anxious to be preparing her resources against the rent day, she watched the first signs of the approach of the fish, determining to try the experiment of selling them fresh to the people at the other end of her island, who, having no boats, could not fish for themselves. Ronald was going out to his usual labor in the field one July morning, when he observed Ella looking first up to the sky and then

abroad over the glittering Sound in which the islands lay, like vessels becalmed, and beyond which rose the blue peaks of Argyleshire.

'The sun is bright over Lorn, Ella: were ye thinking of a trip to-day?'

'Indeed I was,—not with the nets,—time enough for that; but we might try with the hook and see if the shoals are near, but if the sun will not keep out, we shall only lose our day.'

'What is Archie going to do?'

'Archie, my man,' said his sister, 'will ye bring me some eggs this day? See, the fowl are waiting for ye.'

'We'll wait a bit,' said Ella to her brother: 'if he does not come back in half an hour, we may trust to the sun not to cheat us.' So Ronald looked out the rods and hooks, while his sister bustled about the cottage before she girded herself for the oar. While thus employed, she sang in the raised voice with which maidens sing in these islands. Ere long, she turned round and saw Archie sitting at the door-sill fastening a piece of string to a switch, in imitation of the rods Ronald was preparing.

'Well, Archie; have you quarrelled with the birds to-day, that ye are home so soon? And where are my eggs?'

'The fowl must wait,' muttered Archie. 'I can't play to-day.'

'Are ye ill, my lad?' inquired his sister, tenderly passing her hand over his forehead: but Archie withdrew himself and began switching himself with his new rod.

'Ye may go to the field, Ronald; I'm not for the sea to-day,' said Ella. And in less than an hour, the sky was overcast, and summer storms swept over the Sound at intervals till night.

'We may always trust Archie,' observed Ronald. 'He has a keener sight into the place of storms than we.'

The next day the birds did not wait in vain for Archie. He was stirring as soon as they, having stolen out from his sister's side at dawn, and crossed the bar of sand while the tide was yet low. When the sun peeped above the mountains of Lorn, as fair as on the preceding day, the little lad shouted and clapped his hands above his head; whereupon myriads of sea-birds rose fluttering round him, and wheeled, and dipped, and hovered, with cries that would have dismayed a stranger, but which Archie always gloried in provoking. While they drove round his head like autumn leaves in a storm, the terns and gulls screaming, the auks piping, and the cormorants croaking, the boy answered them with shouts, and waved his bonnet over his head. Then he clambered to the highest point he could reach, that he might watch the long files of solan geese, as they took their morning flight southwards, and be sure that they were out of sight before he filled his bonnet with their eggs.

His sister and Ronald observed him when they had pushed off from the beach, and were winning their way, each with a steady oar, to the deep waters beyond the bay.

'Fare ye well, Archie,' shouted Ronald in a voice which made the rocks ring again: but Archie took no notice.

'He is too busy to mind. See how he peeps over yon ledge that neither you nor I dare climb. I wager he finds a prize there; he's dancing with pleasure. He has taken them all, and down he creeps,—aye, take care, my lad: that's it; now on his knees, and there finding a step with his foot. Ye see he never slips. Now he's down, I'll try to win a look.'

Ella sang with all the power of her lungs, and this time Archie turned, clapped his hands and stood still to watch the boat.

'He will not be home sooner than we,' said Ronald. 'He is happy to-day, and he will wait for the afternoon ebb.'

'I have put some more bannocks in his hole,' said Ella, 'and some fresh water, so he will wait for nothing till night.'

'And the storm cast up so much weed yesterday,' said Ronald, 'that he may float all the day if he likes.'

This floating was Archie's favorite amusement, in the interval between the departure of the gannets in the morning and their return from the south at eve. There was a strong current round the Storr, from an eddy below the hole he called his cave quite round the point to a ledge of rocks on the other side of the promontory; which ledge, being a favorable spot for embarkation, was called the quay. Archie's delight was to drop feathers, straws, weed, or eggshells, into the eddy, to watch them come up

again after they had disappeared, and float round the point, and to find them again collected at the quay. Nobody could please him so well as by giving him a new substance to float, and he brought home many a gannet for the sake of the feathers, more than for the kind smile and stroke of the head with which Ella rewarded such enterprises. She was proud of Archie's feats in bird-catching; and if ever she spoke to a stranger on her domestic affairs, represented Archie as adding to the resources of the household, in no small degree. He seldom exerted himself to hunt the puffins out of their burrows in the rock, and had not sense or patience to manage snares; but such birds as were stupid enough to go on laying their eggs where they were taken away as soon as they appeared, and such as were tame enough to sit still and be taken by the hand, were Archie's prey. He twisted their necks as he had seen his brothers do, and pounced them in his plaid, and still conceived himself to be on terms of close friendship with the species, fancying that their morning screams were cries of invitation to him, and returning the compliment at eve, by singing southwards from the highest point he could reach, if he thought them late in coming home.

Ella was not mistaken in thinking the herrings were come. There were so many stragglers ready to be caught with newly-tinned hooks, that it was evident a shoal was at hand, and that her nets might be brought into use within a few days.

'See there!' said Ella, when late in the afternoon she and her brother suspended their labor to eat and rest; 'it brightens one's eyes to see such a spoil for one day.'

'And such fine fish, too,' replied Ronald. 'My heart misgave me this morning lest we should find them like what they were last year. It would be a good thing for such as we if we could judge of herring like cod, and know when we should find them well-fed and most fit to be eaten. Last year they were as lean as a moor, and now they are as plump as a barley-field.'

'Thanks be to Him that guides them in the deep waters,' said Ella; 'there will be joy under many a roof this season.'

Ronald reverently uncovered his head. 'I wonder,' said he, 'that we see no more boats. Yon sloop is from Greenock, I wager; come to take up herrings and kelp. She may keep her anchor down long; for not a hook has been thrown in the Sound till ours, that I could see, and yonder is the first help fire within sight this season.'

'Ye'll have one of your own, next season, Ronald, and, I doubt not, it will show light betimes. So willing as ye are to help in the field and on the water, we owe ye our toil when the storms come. The field once laid out, and the profits of the fish safe pouched, and Fergus's peat-stored, he and I will be your servants in our turn, Ronald, and cut and cull weed as fast as ye can draw it in. The rope is begun already.'

'Is it? How thoughtful ye are, Ella! When could ye find time to think of my rope?'

'O, there's ever time for what ought to be provided. I have thinned the pony's tail now and then for a long time, so that I have near hair enough; and when Archie was heavy one day, I thought I could work for you and sing to him at one time; and in the storm yesterday I twisted more. We shall have a long stout rope before the first large drift of weed, and if ye crop the ledges as plentifully as they promise, we shall have a grand fire, one of the first of the season. How proud it will make me, Ronald, to help to row over your first venture of kelp!'

'Not so proud as it will make me to put the money into the pouch, Ella. To think that I help to pay the laird!'

'I wish it might be into his own hands,' said Ella. 'I should like to make you the bearer of it then.'

'And if not,' said Ronald, 'it will be honor enough to discharge ourselves of Mr. Callum. Ye have taught me my lesson there, Ella; and when the time comes, I'll show ye a picture of yourself as like as a lad can be to a tall woman. I'll go out beside the door when I hear the pace of his poney on the shingle, and fold my arms in my plaid, and make a reverence about half as low as to the laird, only stiffer. And I'll show the lap of the pouch and say, "Here are the laird's dues. Would it please you to count them now or when we have pledged your head and ours?"'

'Ye're a saucy-lad,' said Ella; 'you know he can't bear to hear that any one is head over him.'

'That is the very reason everybody puts him in

mind of it,' replied Ronald. 'Well; all this time, Fergus is holding his pony, and you are spreading the best cloth; and he is looking doubtful whether he shall come in, not liking the coldness of people so far below him, but smelling the hot goose very savoury.—So he comes in to count the dues at any rate, after which—'

'Now, Ronald, hold your tongue, or we shall have no dues to count. I've done my meal, and see where we have drifted, and the sun going down too.'

Ella plied both oars, while Ronald hastily devoured the rest of his bannock. When they got within easy reach of home, they once more drew in their oars and cast their hooks; but as it was with less success than before, Ronald again gave a loose to his tongue, in a way which his awe of his sister would not have allowed if Fergus had not been absent, and if his being Ella's sole partner in an excursion of business had not established an unusual familiarity between them. After providing that Fergus should have his turn as rent-payer, he went on—

'I should like to make Archie do it for once. Do you think we could teach him his lesson?'

'I will not have him tried,' said Ella decidedly. 'Archie is not made to hold a money-pouch, or to have any worldly dealings.'

'Yet he brings in what helps to fill it.'

'And how innocently! It is his love for the things that God made that makes him follow sport. The birds are his playmates while they wheel round his head, and when he takes them on the nest, he has no thought of gain,—and evil be to him that first puts the thought into him! He strokes their soft feathers against his cheek and watches the white specks wandering through the water like snow flakes through the air. He does not look beyond the pleasure to his eyes and to his heart, and he never shall; and gold and silver are not the things to give pleasure to such an eye and such a heart, and he shall never know them.'

'Then he can never know how much he owes you, Ella, for the care you take of him. He little guesses how you have spun half the night to make his plaid, and won money hardly to find him a bonnet, and all the toil of your fishing, and grinding, and baking.'

'And why should he? He loves me, and all the better for not knowing why. He wears his plaid as the birds do their feathers; he feels it warm, and never thinks where it came from. He finds his barley cakes and fresh water in his cave as lambs find clover and springs in their pasture. I see him satisfied, and like that he should love me for what costs me no toil,—for singing when he is heavy, and for wearing what he brings me when he is merry. When he lays his hot head in my lap, or pulls my skirt to make me listen to the wind, I value his love all the more for its not being bought.'

'I see you always lure him out when Mr. Callum is coming,' observed Ronald.

'Yes; and for the same reason I let him hide himself among the rocks the day the laird was here—I have a constant fear that Mr. Callum would be for sending him away; and so I hinder our having any words about the lad. I am easier about that since the laird himself took notice of him so kindly; but Mr. Callum shall never lay a finger on his head, even to bless him, if I can help it. Better keep him innocent of the man entirely.'

'He is likely to be innocent of all but ourselves, and now and then the Murdochs; for he sees nobody else.'

'He has more companions than we have, too. He makes friendship where we only make war among living things. How he would handle these very fish that we stow away so carelessly! But come; we have caught the last we shall get to-day: let us make haste home and to rest. I must be stirring early and away to make the first winnings for the pouch, and Fergus shall have his turn with me to-morrow.'

Ella was determined to try for once whether she could not make her way by land to the north of the island. There was no road, and the difficulty of some of the passes was so great as to render the journey as fatiguing as one of twenty miles. In a straight line, it would not have been so much as two miles; but the many and steep ascents trebled the actual distance, while some were nearly if not quite impassable. If she could once, with her pony, traverse the island, she might be able to judge whether it would afford any market for her fresh fish; and at the same time learn whether there were fertile spots to which her brothers might drive their cattle,

and whether it would answer to load their pony with weed for manure or kelp from different parts of the shore.

It proved a toilsome experiment. She sold some of her fish at her own price; but there were so few families, and they could so seldom afford to buy food, that it seemed hardly likely to answer to give up a whole day of her own labor and the pony's for so poor a return, in addition to the previous day's labor in fishing. They found some patches of good grass among the dells, but too difficult of access to be of much use; and their examination of the shore convinced them that Ronald had possession of the best portion within the circuit of the island.—All this settled, the next object was to prepare for a trip to the Greenock sloop.

CHAPTER IV.

WHOM HAVE WE HERE?

Ronald had an opportunity of being dignified towards Mr. Callum long before the rent-day came round. The steward's curiosity led him to visit the tenants and see how they were attempting to improve their croft; and one day in October his boat was seen rounding the Storr, and making for the landing-place. Archie happened to be amusing himself on his island at the time, and Mr. Callum was observed by Ella to turn round as if watching the boy's proceedings up to the moment of landing. He looked by no means in his pleasantest mood.

'Good morning,' said he, as Ella awaited him at the door of the cottage. 'Where are your brothers? I want your brothers.'

'Ronald is in the field. I will call him, if you will please to sit down. He will not detain you.'

'Let him alone, pray. The other lad will do as well.'

'Fergus is gone a trip to-day to sell his peat; we do not expect him till night.'

'To sell his peat! He had better take care of his own supply first, I think. You will want to use all you can get before the winter is over.'

Ella replied by opening a boarded window on one side of the cottage, through which was seen, at a little distance, a large well-built stack of peat. She next added some to her fire, that Mr. Callum might not have to complain that she grudged fuel in her hospitality.

'And pray how does Fergus manage to get peat enough for everybody? He keeps within his boundary, I hope.'

Ella was too much offended to answer otherwise than by pointing the way to the peat-land, where, however, the steward showed no inclination to go.

'I would have him take care what he is about,' continued Callum. 'I have the laird's strict orders that the live turf is to be replaced over every inch from which peat is dug.'

Ella observed that it was for Fergus's interest to observe this rule on a land which he hoped to hold for a long time, since the peat could not otherwise be renewed.

'No need to tell me that, Ella: but these youngsters are in such a hurry to cut, especially when they can sell, that they forget the law. Remember, if I find a foot bare, the peat-land is forfeited.'

'Your threat is harsh, sir, and if you should act upon it, I should be obliged to appeal to the laird: but let us see whether Fergus has put himself in your power.' And she moved on.

'What is all this?' cried the irritable steward, as they walked up the little sloping beach towards the back of the tenement. 'Your brothers get the fairies to help them, I think. Who ever saw barley growing out of a round shingle,—clean shingle, without any soil.'

'My father saw it, as he used to tell us, in rocky places where soil was scarce; and when we found we could do little with our field this season Ronald bethought himself of this plan; and it answers very well, you see. We laid down seaweed pretty thick, and dropped our seed into it, and now the manure is changed into food for us.'

'Poor grain enough,' said Callum.

'Not so good as we hope to raise in our field, but good enough to be acceptable to those who would otherwise have none.'

'And pray how long do you mean to let it stand? The wind will soon make it shed its grain, and then much good may the straw do you!'

Ella observed that it had been late sown, so that they were glad to let it stand to the last moment. The autumn was particularly serene and warm, so that the grain was still uninjured; but it was to be cut the next day but one, when she should have sold her fish and made room for her humble harvest.—What fish? and where was she going to sell it?—She had salted a cask of herrings, and was about to make a trip to the sloop from Glasgow now in the Sound to dispose of the produce of her fishing.

Callum muttered something about their taking good care of themselves, and the too great kindness of the laird not to ask rent for all they held. It should be done soon, he could promise them.—Whenever they had a neighbor who should follow the same occupations, Ella quietly observed, they should be willing to pay rent for the field, and the waters, and the peat-ground, and the keeping shore.

‘And why not sooner, if I choose to ask it?’

‘Because it would answer better to us to move to some place in equal condition, where no rent would be asked.’

‘And where will you find such an one, my lass?’

Ella mounted the rock near, and pointed to one island and another and another where situations as good as this had not yet been taken possession of, and which the laird would be glad to see improved, provided he received the interest of the capital he laid out. Callum observed that she seemed to think herself very knowing, and asked where she got all this wisdom. When he found that the matter had been talked over and settled with the laird himself, he had nothing more to say on that subject.

He was not more fortunate on the next topic. He asked who it was on the Storr that was screaming like a sea-gull, and throwing his arms about as if he was going to fly across the sound? Ella paused a moment before she replied that it was her brother Archibald; and then underwent a cross-questioning about the lad, and the reasons why he had not been introduced with the rest into Mr. Callum's august presence. An obvious mode of venting his spleen now presented itself. He insisted upon what Ella did not attempt to deny, that the Storr did not come within her boundaries, and followed this up by a prohibition to every one of the family to set foot on the rock. Ella was now truly glad that she had obtained the laird's special permission for Archie to haunt the rock as much as he pleased. Mr. Callum's temper was not improved by learning the fact. He did not pretend to doubt it; for, in the first place, he knew Ella to be remarkable for strict honor; and, in the next, she seemed so guarded on all points, that he began to think it prudent not to expose his authority to more mortifications.

Ronald now appeared, ready to show Mr. Callum what had been done in his department, as well as in Fergus's. Ella cautioned her brother by a look, which he well understood, to keep his temper and restrain his tongue, and then returned to her occupations in the cottage. Callum resumed the subject of Archie, but could make little out of Ronald about him; for, besides that the tender respect in which they held the poor lad made them unwilling to speak of his peculiarities to strangers, Ronald knew his sister's desire to keep Archie out of Callum's notice. He was now rather more discreet than was necessary, and left an impression on the steward's mind that there was some mystery about the boy,—a mystery which must be penetrated.

He did not accept Ella's proffered hospitality, having already ordered his dinner at the farm; but he sauntered down again in the evening to see Fergus come home, and hear whether he had made a good bargain of his peat. A fit of superstition about the fairies came upon him again when he heard that not only was the present cargo sold among the inhabitants of a sandy island near, but so much more was wanted, that Ronald must borrow Murdoch's boat, the first convenient day, and accompany Fergus in their own in another trip to the same market. Callum laughed when Fergus said he had taken no money, his customers not being possessed of any coin; but he brought oatmeal, salt, and a light basket, or rather pouch, made of birch twigs and oat-straw, for Archie to carry eggs in. He was offered oil, but thought they had obtained enough from their fish to last the season. Ella approved his bargain, and said that oatmeal and salt, being both wanted, were more to her than money just now, and would save her a voyage. So Fergus was happy, and nothing remained to be wished but that Mr. Callum would go away. He paced the little beach as if he was waiting for some-

thing, and at last asked impatiently when the younger lad would come home.

‘When the tide is low enough for him to cross; maybe in two hours.’

This was too long for a cross person's patience; so the steward departed without seeing Archie this time.

The morrow was to be a busy day,—the day of the first sale of salted herrings. As the cask was to be carried on board the sloop, Ella wished her brothers to go with her. She wanted their help, and also desired that they should gain such experience in that kind of traffic as would fit them for going without her on a future occasion; for she did not much like the idea of boarding the vessel and making her bargain among the sailors.

The lads embarked their cask, fitted, for the first time, the wooden key to the wooden lock of their door, carried Archie high and dry through the surf, and deposited him, laughing, beside his sister, and pulled stoutly round the point in the teeth of a strong and chilling wind. Archie was in one of his merry moods this day, which made his sister the less unwilling to leave him with the Murdochs at the farm till evening, which she was about to do. He laughed when the wind drove the spray in their faces, and mimicked the creaking of the oars in their sockets as they strained against the force of a rough sea. He made some resistance to being landed when they reached the cove below the farm, but took his sister's hand and ascended the cliff with her while repeating that he wanted to go on the sea again.

The Murdochs were good-natured people, when nothing happened to make them otherwise, and they declared themselves delighted to see Archie, and promised to take all possible care of him. Ella reminded them that the only care necessary was to give him his dinner, and see that he did not stray beyond the farm.

When the rowers got fairly out to sea, they were dismayed to find that the sloop had disappeared during the night. There was every reason to fear that they were a day too late for the market, and that the last vessel to be seen that season was now sailing away from them.

‘If it be,’ said Ronald, ‘we must take a voyage to the Clyde islands, or perhaps to Greenock; and I should not much mind that: Ella could do without us for a few days.’

‘We must prevent such a waste of time,’ said Ella; ‘so pull away southwards, and let us see if we cannot overtake the sloop. She cannot have gone far with this wind. The first of you that wearsies, give me the oar.’

The boys continued their rowing in silence till Ella desired Ronald to make for a boat some way off and hail it. He did so.

‘Holla! Which way lies the Jean Campbell?’

‘Gone northwards before the wind.’

Northwards! Then she could not have completed her cargo yet; but would she return through the same Sounds? they asked the people in the other boat.

‘Hardly likely,’ was the answer; ‘but there is another coming up, the Mary of Port Glasgow. If ye clear the point, ye'll see her with all her sails set, unless she has stopped to take in kelp or herrings.’

Away went the boat again, and eager were the rowers to learn whether the market was yet open to them. In half an hour they came in sight of the Mary, not sailing before the wind as they expected; but rolling idly on the rough sea, while boats were making towards her from various points of the shores within sight.

When they came alongside, Ella spoke her errand; and on receiving an encouraging answer, would willingly have sent her brothers on board to manage their bargain, while she remained in the boat. But it was too important an affair for them to conduct, inexperienced as they were in traffic; and it was necessary for her to go on deck of the Mary. While talking with the master, and observing no one else, she did not perceive, as Ronald did, that a man on deck who looked like a passenger, was watching her closely, and drawing nearer to listen to what she said. Ronald placed himself beside his sister, and then the stranger looked down into the boat where Fergus remained.

‘Will you make room for me, Fergus?’ he asked. ‘Will you take me home with you to see your father and Archie?’

Fergus reddened all over; and when he made his reply, the stranger was moved also.

‘Your father dead!’ he exclaimed. ‘I never

heard it. Let me come to you that you may tell me all.’

‘You must ask Ella if there's room for you,’ said Fergus; ‘besides, I don't know who you are.’

‘Do you ever think of one Angus that you once knew?’

‘Aye, often enough, and wonder if he be dead. Why, I do believe you are Angus, sir! Ronald, Ronald! See if this be not Angus back again.’

It was Angus; but so changed, that it was no wonder his younger friends did not know him after five years of absence. Ella knew him at a glance, when the sound of his name made her turn her head. She looked steadily in his face, and asked, with a calm voice, what brought him among the islands again?—but her cheek was pale as ashes, and her hands trembled so that she could hardly hold the money which the impatient master was in a hurry to pay her. Angus, as agitated as herself, made no reply to her question, but leapt into her boat in order to assist her down. She drew back immediately.

‘Ella! you will let me go home with you. We must not part almost before we have met. I am bound for Garveloch, and you must let me row you home.’

‘You do not know our present home, Angus. If you choose to seek us there, you will find a welcome; but I cannot take you.’

Angus now grew pale. He turned quickly round upon Fergus.

‘Is Ella married?’

‘No.’

With a light step he sprang back into the Mary, whispering to Ella as he handed her down.

‘I have much to say, and am eager to say it. For whatever reasons you refuse to let me go with you, you cannot prevent my following. Farewell now. You will soon see me.’

Ella turned back as she was departing to tell him that she had removed, and to describe where she might be found. Encouraged by this circumstance, Angus smiled, and Ella's stern countenance relaxed.—Never had she frowned as Angus did when he heard the seamen jesting on the fishwoman who carried herself as high as a princess to the master. ‘It is not the way of fishwomen,’ quoth they, ‘even when they bring half a cargo, instead of one poor cask like that.’

Angus thought to himself that she was a princess,—the princess of fishwomen. He knew her well,—all her thoughts and all her feelings, in former days, and he saw already that she had lost none of her dignity under the pressure of her cares. He presently arranged with the master to meet the Mary at a certain point among the islands, within a few days, for the purpose of removing his luggage, and obtained a seat in a boat whose crew engaged to set him on shore in Garveloch.

CHAPTER V.

A HIGHLAND NIGHT.

Scarcely a word was spoken in Ella's boat during the return. Her brothers began to revive their recollections of Angus; of what he had taught them, and how he had played with them, and of whatever he said and did; but observing that Ella, instead of joining in their conversation, drew her plaid over her head and fixed her eyes on the waters, they kept a respectful silence, and even refrained from asking a single question on the important subject of her traffic with the master of the Mary. The wind still rose and increased the difficulty of rowing so much, that the lads would soon have been disposed to leave off talking, if no restraint had been upon them. At last, Ella observed poor Fergus wiping his brows, though the gale was chill.

‘Fergus, give me the oar. I have been very thoughtless,—or, rather, over full of thought,—or you should not have toiled for me all this time. Take my plaid, for this breeze is wintry.’

She threw her plaid round him and gave him a slight caress, as she passed to take his place.

‘Sing, Fergus,’ said his brother, ‘it lightens the way.’

As soon as he had recovered his breath, Fergus sang an air which Angus used to love to time for them with his oar when he took them out to sea for pleasure, before their days of toil began. Ella joined her voice, perhaps for the purpose of checking

the tears which began to flow faster than at any time since the night of her parent's death. Apparently unconscious of them, she plied her toil and her song more vigorously when the boat neared the cove where they were to take in Archie. They looked out for him, hoping that the song might bring him down to the boat and prevent any loss of time in getting home. Nobody appeared, however, but one of Murdoch's girls, standing stock still on the ridge of the rock. Ella signed and beckoned, and her brothers shouted for Archie; to all which the lass made no other answer than shaking her head like a weathercock.

'Give me my plaid,' said Ella, who instantly stepped on shore and mounted to the farm. She could see nobody for some time, and when she did, it was only the girl who had watched her landing.

'Where are all the family, Meg?'

'All gone, except Archie; he's back again. Father and the others are gone to the moor for peat, and mother is milking the cows a great way off.'

'And Archie? Call him, for we must be going.'

'He can't get out,' said Meg, grinning and pointing to Mr. Callum's apartment, the shutters of which were closed. 'He's all in the dark, and he has been flogged for stealing the laird's birds, and I don't know how many eggs and feathers.'

Ella had scarcely patience to stand and hear the story. Archie, being left to himself, had wandered home and gained his rock. Callum had watched and followed him, and caught the poor boy with a solan goose in his bosom, eggs in his new basket, and a bunch of feathers in his cap. The steward had flogged Archie unmercifully with his cane, partly unaware, it must be hoped, of the true state of the case, since he had told the sufferer that this discipline was meant to teach him not to take what did not belong to him. He brought him back, closed the shutters of his apartment, pushed the boy in and double-locked the door, telling the children who looked on in terror that they should be served in like manner if they attempted to speak to Archie till he should be released. He had now been shut up three hours, and Mr. Callum was not to be back till night. Ella shuddered when she heard that the boy had looked much flushed when he went in, and had screamed violently till, nobody taking notice, his cry had gradually sunk to a low moaning. She rushed to the door and called him in her gentlest voice. No answer. She sang as she went to do when he was ill; and then the moan was heard again.

'He will die unless I can get to him. I know that sound well. Run, Meg, and tell your father Archie will die, if we do not break the door that I may nurse him. Run for your life!—Hush! Archie, hush! I am coming, lad, and we will let in the light again, and you shall see how the sea is tossing. I am coming, Archie; be patient, lad.'

She flew to the cliff to beckon her brothers. In a few minutes, almost everybody came but the one most wanted, Mr. Callum. Everybody was very sorry of course: none more so than those who ought to have prevented this mischief. They were willing to do anything,—to break door or window as soon as desired. But no proper tools were at hand, and the noise terrified Archie so extremely, that it was thought best to let things remain as they were till Callum's return, which could not be much longer delayed. Ella sent her brothers home directly, afraid that she should not be able to keep their tempers within bounds when the enemy should present himself. She waited, pacing up and down the steep rocky path which overlooked her own dwelling, as well as the way by which the steward was expected to approach.

After a while, she distinctly saw her brothers standing in conversation with a third person, beside the gate of the field. Supposing the stranger to be Callum, she watched with the utmost anxiety, expecting each moment to see the lads show some sign of wrath; but their gestures were not those of anger, nor did their companion, on a closer examination, look like the steward. At this instant a voice close behind her made her start.

'So you are come at last, Mr. Callum,' said she. 'I hope it may be in time to prevent your committing murder. How do you propose to comfort us if you find Archibald dead?'

'Dead! Poor, nonsense! let me tell you, madam, I came down just in time to prevent theft this morning. If the laird is pleased to let idle boys play on his estate, he gives no leave for them to steal the produce. I have not done with master Archibald yet; I mean to make a further example of him.'

'Ye'll be too late,' replied Ella, with a convulsed

countenance. 'One on whom God himself has put the mark of innocence, one that has been ever under the guidance of good powers,—one that has only been kept here so long by being cherished, and no ill being suffered to come nigh him—is not one to live under your hands, Mr. Callum; and knowing this, I kept him out of your sight, till an evil day has laid him open to blame and punishment. Come, sir, and see if your work is not done; and if not, beware how you finish it!'

So saying, she strode onwards and beckoned him after her: but he stood still. Callum shared largely in the superstitions which abound in the islands, where the strongest and proudest minds are subdued by fears too absurd to affect children in more enlightened places. Connecting in a moment Archie's peculiarities, which he had been unable to understand, Ella's hints of his being the favorite of unseen powers, and all that was extraordinary in herself as she stood with flashing eyes, and a working countenance, and her tall form trembling with some other passion than fear, Callum resolved to be quit of her and the boy as soon as might be; but above all things to prevent their meeting in his presence, lest they should work some harm upon him.

'Come back, Ella,' said he, in a somewhat softer tone; 'you will only do harm by going with me. The truth is, I have sent to the laird for his pleasure about the lad, as there happened to be a messenger going. I shall have an answer by the morn, and then I will release your brother,—if you stay out of my sight,—not otherwise, I promise you: so go your ways home; and trust the boy with me for the night. You well may, for he never lay in a gentleman's room or on a gentleman's bed before, I'll be bound to say.'

All remonstrance, all entreaty was vain to alter Callum's pretended purpose: so Ella had recourse to a secret plan in her turn. She resolved to steal up to the farm as soon as it should be dark, and every one gone to rest, and to work on Mr. Callum's fears by means which she well understood. She now asked impatiently where the laird was. Not where she could reach him to lodge a counter-plea, the steward answered with a grim smile: he held that part of justice in his own hands. Ella could learn nothing more than she already knew,—that he must be near, as his answer would arrive by morning.

As she was going slowly down to the beach, she met Angus. 'If ye have any friendship for us,' cried she, showing her surprise only by her raised color, 'if ye ever valued my father's blessing, help us now'; and she related what had just passed. Angus instantly replied that the laird was at Oban. If so, Ella said, the messenger's boat ought to be in sight; and she looked intently over the troubled expanse of waters, now heaving and tossing in an autumn gale as if they would swallow up the scattered islands.

'One might easily miss a small bark in such a sea,' said she, 'and the gloom is settling fast. See how the mists are gathering about the Storr. The osprey will scarce find his nest, or the bark keep clear of shoals.'

'There he is!' cried Angus. 'Just below, yonder, a boat shot out from behind the rock, and now she is laboring with the swell. She has only two rowers. Your brothers shall go with me, and we will reach the laird first.'

'Go, and my blessing on you!' said Ella. 'Bring back justice and a word of kindness for Archie, and I will thank you for ever.'

No time was lost; and in a few minutes the two boats were seen rowing as close a race as ever had honor or profit for its object. Ella could not help wondering whether the steward was watching the struggle with all the anxiety that he deserved to feel, and all the shame of being discovered in a falsehood. It was impossible that an answer should return from Oban before the morning, and Callum's having said so was a new proof that he was frightened at what he had done. The daylight was now failing fast; the Argyleshire mountains lost the red tinge which had been cast upon them from the western sky. All was gray and misty, and when Ella fancied for a moment that her brothers' boat had given up the race and changed its course, she supposed that her overstrained sight had deceived her, and retired slowly homewards to await the hour when she might make another attempt upon the farm.

It was a dreary night. The wind swept past in gusts, and hail pattered in hasty showers upon her shingled roof, as she sat beside her peat-fire, striving to compose her busy thoughts. She could settle to no employment, but looked out frequently to see if she could discover the moon's place in the sky, in

order to form some idea of the time. At length, believing it was near midnight, she equipped herself for her expedition, strapping her plaid close about her, and carrying warm clothing for the boy. While doing this, she fancied she heard a footstep without. She paused, but supposed it could only be the rattling of the shingle as the waves retreated; but, not being perfectly convinced, she looked about cautiously through the darkness as she went forth, and listened intently. Before she had gone many paces, a sudden gleam of moonlight showed her the shadow of a man, standing up against the side-wall of the cottage. She quickly retreated, but not through fear. She lighted a slip of pine-wood and without ceremony held it up in the man's face. It was Callum. 'You are come to tell me that Archie is dead,' said Ella with forced calmness. 'No wonder you linger by the way.'

'He is not dead nor likely to die if, as you say, the good powers are fond of him. I have left him with them, for he is past my management.'

'You have carried him to the sands to be drowned,' cried Ella, snatching hold of his cloak which was dripping wet.

'It was more likely I should be drowned than he,' said Callum, sullenly. 'He scrambled over to the rock as if he saw the fairies waiting for him, and I found my way back as I could, but the water was up to my knees.'

'How long since?'

'Not above five minutes.'

'There is time yet,' cried Ella, hastening in for food and a bottle of milk. While she was making her rapid preparations, Callum, who had followed her, proceeded with his explanations that as he could do nothing with the boy, who would neither eat, speak, nor sleep, he thought it best to carry him back to his haunt and let those manage him that could; and he hoped it would be the last he should have to do with people of her sort. A half-smile passed over Ella's countenance: she made no reply, but pushed a seat beside the fire, set some barley cakes and whisky on the table, pointed to the heap of fuel in the corner, and was gone, drawing the door after her. Callum had feeling enough to be stung with the reproach implied in these observances of hospitality. He pushed the food and drink from him and sat, with his hands upon his knees, muttering beside the fire. A thought struck him, he started up and ran after Ella, shouting,

'Let me hold the torch, lass, while you cross, and may be I can get over too and help to bring him home.' But Ella, who had already reached the low sand, waved him back contemptuously, and was half through the water before he arrived on the brink. Dashing, foaming, the tide did not look very tempting; and having seen Ella climb the opposite ledge, wring out her wet plaid and stride on, Callum returned, full of mortification, to the fire-side.

The torch blew out before Ella reached Archie's hole. As soon as she came within hearing, she tried to attract his attention by the usual methods, but obtaining no answer, began to fear that he had been placed in some other recess of the Storr. She groped her way in, however, and stumbled over him near the entrance. He shrieked as she had never heard him shriek before, and a fierce pang of indignation shot through her heart at him who had first made this innocent being subject to fear. She succeeded in soothing the boy; she lavished on him all the tender words that came with her tears; she cooled his hot forehead; persuaded him to eat, and hoping to make him forget where he was, and that anything painful had passed, she told him tales till he fell asleep with his arms round her neck. She had soothed herself in soothing him, and was too well inured to cold and wet to be much affected by them; so that she too leaned against the wall of the little cave and slept.

It was some hours after, but while the dawn was yet very faint, that Archie roused her by starting up and running to the mouth of the cave. A red light flickered upon his face as he stood; and his sister following, saw a kelp fire flaming high upon the beach. The season for kelp burning was considered over; but a glance at the boat drawn up on the shingle and at the figures about the fire showed her what it meant. Her brothers were already home and finding the cottage empty, and not knowing in what direction she was gone, had lighted this fire as the best signal which could intimate their return without alarming Mr. Callum, to whom a kelp fire was one of the commonest of all sights.

'See, Archie, there is Ronald feeding the fire, and Fergus stirring it. They have made the fire to light us home.'

But Archie did not clap his hands as usual at the sight of a kelp fire, and seemed disposed to hide himself in the cave. It was because a third figure stood between them and the light. It was the first time he had feared a stranger; and again Ella had to battle with her mingled compassion and indignation. She tried the experiment whether Archie had any recollection of Angus, of whom he had been very fond five years before. She tempted him to a baby game which Angus used to play with him, but which had been laid aside as Archie grew taller. 'Ah! Angus, Angus, I want Angus!' cried the boy, just as he used to do, and just as she wished to hear him, for the first time since Angus's departure.

'Do you want Angus? Well, there he is, standing beside Fergus. Call him and perhaps he will hear you.'

Poor Archie tried, but he was too much exhausted to make himself heard to any distance; nor did Ella succeed better, as the wind was against her. For a full hour, she saw the three figures pace the beach, and look intently in all directions before they perceived her; but at last the fluttering of her plaid became visible to them through the gray dawn, and they ran down to the brink of the water which was still too deep to be crossed on foot, though too shallow for a boat. They waved their caps in token of having succeeded in their errand, and awaited in the utmost impatience the sinking of the water. When the first patch of sand was left dry, Angus plunged through, and, well knowing Ella's heart, gave his first attention to Archie. Ella gave him his cue: he hid his face with his bonnet, let Archie uncover it, as in old days, and was immediately known. Archie's loud laugh was like music to his sister's anxious heart. He put his arm lovingly round the neck of his old playfellow, in order to his being carried home; and though feverish and evidently in pain, showed no greater signs of dulness and depression than on some former occasions of illness.

Ronald was impatient to tell his sister that they had found the laird by Angus having discerned his boat off one of the islands, half way between Garveloch and the shore. Callum's messenger, proceeding to Oban, had overshot his mark, and missed giving the first version of the tale which both parties were in haste to tell. The laird had pronounced no judgment, but would probably land on Garveloch, in a day or two and hear both sides of the question.

'Then,' said Ella, 'thanks to your zeal our point is gained.'

CHAPTER VI.

THE SCOTCH ABROAD.

Angus's zeal had indeed been equal to that of the brothers; in addition to which his patience had been most meritorious. He waited till Archie was safe before he said a word of his errand to Garveloch or made any reference to his former friendship with Ella and her family. His turn to be cared for came at last. Ella recovered her courtesy when the little party was seated at the morning meal.

'Welcome to our board, Angus,' said she. 'You will excuse our being so late in saying the words and offering the hand of welcome.'

'Far more easily,' said Angus, grasping her offered hand in great emotion; 'far more easily, Ella, than the coldness with which you offer it at last. If I were an utter stranger, you could not look more haughty than you do at this moment.'

'Nay, Angus; you have yourself ordered your reception. If you have made yourself a stranger for five long years, you cannot wonder that we look upon you as such.'

'I have ever explained, Ella, why I could not come; and as it pleased you to take no notice of my reasons, I left off offering them, though not till after a longer perseverance than you would have condescended to use.'

'Reasons! How offered? By whom brought? When were they sent? These and many more questions were asked in a hurry by the two lads, while their sister waited in evident anxiety for an answer. It appeared that Angus had written two or three letters before he entered into the service of the nobleman in whose suit he had gone to America. Being there employed in the interior, he had no longer any means of sending to Scotland,

but hoped that his former letters had proved him trustworthy; and that when he returned to his native country, he should be able to obtain some intimation that he would be welcome among his old friends. None such having arrived, he now came in person to see whether he was forgotten, or whether the family was dead and dispersed like his own, or what else could have happened. It now appeared for the first time that Ella and her brothers knew neither that his mother had died in Lorn, nor that he had entered into anybody's service, nor that he had gone to America, or returned from abroad.

'Bless me!' cried Angus. 'I do believe the fairies are in Garveloch, and Mr. Callum in the right after all! Come, Ronald, can you tell me who is king of England now?'

Ronald looked at Fergus, and Fergus at Ella, and Ella said she heard one of the seamen on board the Mary swear by king George.—Aye; but which King George? This was more than our islanders could tell; and they reminded Angus that till they boarded the sloop for the first time, they had not seen a strange face for years. The laird and Mr. Callum were their only visitors, and politics had never been talked in this island since the rebellion under the Pretender.

Angus said he could not be jealous of their ignorance about his proceedings in Canada, if no tidings of king George ever reached Garveloch. He looked grave, however, when he remarked that such complete separation from the world was a serious disadvantage in their traffic. As long as they knew nothing of the prices which their herrings and kelp bore in the market, they were completely at the mercy of those who came to buy of them.

'There!' cried Ronald with great delight, 'I always said we should go ourselves to Greenock instead of selling to sloops in the Sound.'

'I do not think so, Ronald. You would pay more in time and trouble than the information would be worth. If there was anybody here who could read a newspaper—'

Nobody within reach but Mr. Callum, had ever learned the alphabet, and they could not take the liberty of asking him for information, even if he came at the right time to give it. Angus observed that there would be an end of this difficulty if, as he hoped, he should settle in Garveloch.—In the midst of the shouts of the lads, and the shaking of hands caused by this hint, Angus looked down as bashfully as if he had never crossed the Atlantic and seen the world. He evaded all inquiries as to his plans, and seemed anxious to go back to the past.—He related that after being for some time in the service of the nobleman under whom he went out, he took office, at the particular request of his master, under the surveyor and agents appointed to measure and dispose of lands to new settlers.

'What made your master choose you for that service?'

'Many of the settlers were from our part of the kingdom, and the surveyor and agents were English. Quarrels arose out of their different ways of thinking and managing; and some one was wanted to mediate between them. I am heartily glad I was chosen, for I learned a great deal that I should never have known by other means.—It was not utter banishment either; for I now and then met a face I knew, and could talk with a countryman of friends at home. There was Forbes for one; you remember Forbes, Ella?'

'What? he that was suspected of pitching a man from his boat into the sea after a quarrel?'

'The same. He was innocent, I am convinced; but he was so weary of having it cast up to him, that he went abroad and settled in our district in Canada. He had two neighbors that I know something of,—Keith, from Dumbarton, and Canmore the drover. Many a time did we look back together to the bare rocks and bleak moors of Scotland, while we were buried in the thickest of forests.—At those times, we used to wish, for the sake of all parties that we could send you half our trees, for we were as much troubled with having too many as you with too few.'

'Nay,' said Fergus, 'not too few. There are near a dozen birches on the farm above; and one may see a good many alders in the hollows near where we used to live.'

Angus laughed heartily at Fergus's idea of a sufficiency of wood, and explained to him the proportion of trees to an acre in a Canadian forest.

'What can they do with them?' Ronald asked.

'Get rid of them as fast as they can; but it costs vast labor.—Forbes, who was not driven there by poverty, and carried money, was saved the trouble

of clearing. He took a fine fertile piece of ground on the understanding that he would have to pay the highest rent of anybody in the neighborhood. Canmore was the next to settle; and he liking the axe little better than Forbes, paid a sum for having his land cleared; but as his land was not so good as Forbes's, he did not pay real rent for some time.'

'Did Forbes begin paying real rent?'

'No; for there was land equally good elsewhere, which he knew he could have for the cost of clearing and enclosing.'

'Then he paid the interest of capital laid out, as we do for this cottage and fence, and as Canmore did when he took possession of his land?'

'Just so. He first began to pay rent when Canmore raised corn enough to live upon. Forbes raised five quarters over and above what his neighbor could procure from his land; and then the agent came upon Forbes for rent, and he was willing to pay the surplus for the use of the best land. Then Keith arrived, with his axe in his hand, and two stout sons by his side, and no other wealth whatever; so they paid nothing. They cleared the land themselves, and built their own log-hut, and just managed to raise food enough to support them in the humblest way; and thus they were living when I arrived in their neighborhood.'

'But why do land owners give away land in this manner?'

'They only lent it to Keith till he should have brought it into a condition to pay rent, till which time nobody would have given anything for it; and for this loan they paid themselves by taking rent of Canmore. He raised three quarters more than Keith, and was willing to pay them as rent to keep the land he held.'

'Then Canmore paid more than half as much rent as Forbes?'

'No—that would not have been fair; for Forbes's land was as much better than his neighbors as it had been before, and the difference of rent ought therefore to be the same. Forbes now paid eight quarters.'

'That is, five for his land being better than Canmore's, and three for Canmore's being better than Keith's. Then if any body had taken worse land than Keith's, he would have had to pay rent for the first time, and the rents of his neighbors would have been raised.'

'Certainly, and very fairly: for no one would take land that was not worth cultivating, and any land which produces more than would make it worth cultivating can pay rent.'

'Forbes's time then for growing rich,' said Ronald, 'was before he paid rent at all,—when he kept all the produce himself.'

'Yes: and a good deal of profit he made. He consulted me how he might best employ his capital, which was now double what he began with. He looked about for more land; but there was none but what was inferior to Keith's.'

'If he had taken that,' said Ronald, 'poor Keith must have paid rent, and so must Forbes himself,—not for his new land, but an increased sum for the old.'

'I advised him to lay it out rather in improving his old land. He could not by using double capital, make it produce doubly; but he could make it yield more than inferior new land: but this raised his rent as much as if he had taken in inferior land. If the new land would have produced only three quarters, while the improvement of the old yielded five, it was perfectly fair that he should pay the surplus two quarters for rent.'

'Why, then, did you advise him to lay out his capital upon his old land? Either way must have been just the same to him in point of profit, if what-ever was left over was to go to the landlord.'

'By no means. Forbes had now a lease of his superior land, so that he could take for his own share all the difference between his present rent and that which he would have to pay when his lease expired. He went on growing rich, since he not only made the fair profits of his capital, but had the benefit of all improvements till the time came for a new lease.—He laid out more and more capital upon his land, and though each time it brought in a smaller return in proportion, and though each would cause his rent to be raised hereafter, he went on improving for a long time.'

'What made him stop?'

'Finding that he would not be repaid for a further outlay.'

'What did he do with his money then?'

'He came to the surveyor and agent, and told them that the corn raised would sell much higher if

there was an easier way of getting it into a good market. There were so few who wanted to buy corn within a convenient distance of this little settlement, that it was sold very cheap indeed, and was often changed away for things not half the value it would have had in a town. Forbes thought it would be worth while to make a good road to join a canal on which there was traffic to many populous places. He offered to advance a part of the capital necessary, if the agent would pay the rest. It was done, and all parties found the advantage of it. Poor Keith began to prosper now, though he had to pay rent, and to see it raised from time to time.

'What! Rent raised again! Every thing seems to raise rent.'

'High prices do, as a matter of course. When the corn sold so well as to afford the settlers a fine profit, other settlers were in a hurry to come and grow corn, and the original cultivators improved their land more and more, and rents rose in proportion. Those who had long leases got up in the world rapidly, and the owners of the land were presently much more than paid for making the road.'

'But, Angus, rent seems to rise and rise for ever.'

'It would do so, if all countries were in the state of the one I have been describing. Wherever there is the greatest variety of soil, and the largest demand for food, rent rises fastest. The more equal in productiveness lands are made by improvement, and the more easy it is to obtain supplies from other places, the slower is the rise of rent. Forbes and Canmore were expecting to have their rents lowered when I left them, for it was so easy to get corn in abundance that the price had fallen very much; and would not pay for tilling some stubborn soils, which were therefore let out of cultivation.'

'I wish you would tell the Murdochs this,' said Ella. 'They want me to think it hard of the laird to ask rent for my fishery; and they say that the price of herrings will rise as fast as the islands pay rent.'

'The laird can have no rent unless it answers to you to pay it. You bargain for a mutual advantage. He receives money for the use of the land and sea belonging to him, and you have the benefit of a good station.'

'They say that the sea ought to be as free as the air, instead of rent being asked for it.'

'The air would be let, if there were degrees of goodness in it, and if it could be marked out by boundaries and made a profit of like the sea and land; and again, if all land were equally good, and all parts of all seas and rivers equally productive, there would be no rent paid for either the one or the other. The laird who owns all the islands within sight, owns the sounds which divide them, as if they were so many fish ponds; and if one part yields more herrings than another, or, which is nearly the same thing, if the herrings can be got out at less expense of capital and toil at one point than another, it is very fair that a bargain should be struck for the benefit of both parties, whether the property in question be land or water.'

'Or rock either, I suppose,' said Fergus. 'If we sold the feathers of Archie's birds, might not the laird ask rent for the Storr?'

'He would ask a yearly sum of money, which we might fairly call rent. The birds are not produced by the rock as corn is produced by the power of the soil; but as long as the situation is so favorable to sea-fowl as to cause a constant supply on the same spot, it may be said that it yields rent as justly as when we say the same thing of the sea; and much more justly than of mines.'

'I used to hear my father speak,' said Ella, 'of the lead-mines in Isla, and of the high rent they once paid.'

'Yet the mines did not produce more lead in the place of that which was taken away, and therefore the lessees paid the proprietor merely a certain sum for the capital they removed from his property.—They bought the lead of him, in fact, to sell again. They bought it buried in the ground, and sold it prepared for the market. Now, Fergus, tell me what rent is, before we begin to guess what I shall have to pay the laird, if I settle near you.'

'What farm will you have? Where is it? How large?'

'Answer me first,' said Angus, laughing. 'What is rent?'

'The money that a man pays—'

'Nay; rent may be paid in corn, or kelp, or fish, or many things besides money. Better say produce.'

'Rent is the produce that remains to a man—' Ella is to pay rent,' interrupted Ronald, laughing.

'Well, well. Rent is the part of the produce paid to the landlord when his tenant has made as much as his neighbors on worse land will let him gain.'

'True, as far as your account goes; but not clear or full enough. You do not know yet, boys, how important it is for you to understand all this rightly before you pay rent yourselves, and even if you were never to pay.—Come Ronald.'

'Rent,' said Ronald, 'is that portion of produce which is paid to the landlord for the use of whatever makes corn and fish grow in the land or water which the tenant uses.'

'Or, as we say, 'the use of the powers of production.' Very well; this is what we mean by rent. Now, what does rent consist of?'

'Of whatever the richest has left over what the poorest makes of the same quantity of land and of money laid out upon it.'

'Just so; and therefore if your kelp-ledge yields more than mine next season, with equal pains, whatever difference there is will go to the laird as rent. If I get the intelligence I talked of from the market, you may make more while paying a rent, than you would ever have done rent-free, without knowing what your prices ought to be.'

'Had Forbes and his neighbors such intelligence before they sold their corn?'

'O yes: even before the road was made, newspapers found their way across the country; and afterwards we had intercourse with the towns at least once a week.'

'Then I wonder you did not stay where you were. The place seems to have been very prosperous.'

Angus answered, half laughing, that there was another kind of intelligence which he wanted, and could not obtain there, or any where but in Garve-loch. Ella, seeing Angus's eyes fixed upon her, rose and bent over Archie's bed of heather, where the poor lad was still sleeping soundly.

'Your sister's wheel has never stood still all this while,' said Angus to the lads. 'She shames us for being so idle. What shall we do next?'

All bustled about upon this hint, and Ronald and Fergus made haste to their out-door employments, supposing that Angus would accompany them. After letting them go out, however, he softly closed the door, and returned to Ella's side. He found no great difficulty in removing her feelings of displeasure at his long silence, when it was in his power to prove that he had indeed not been silent while he could persuade himself that he had encouragement to write. When Ella heard that he had been working for her all these five long years; that he had supported his hopes upon their tacit agreement when they parted; that he had returned for her sake alone, having no other tie than the natural love of country; when, moreover, he declared his willingness to settle in this very place, and adopt her sisterly cares as his own; when he kissed Archie's forehead, and promised to cherish him as tenderly as herself, Ella had nothing to say. She shed tears as if she had been broken-hearted, instead of finding healing to a heart sorely wounded; and the only thing Angus had to afflict him was the thought how much each had suffered.

'They that have called me proud and severe,' said Ella, when she began to return his confidence, 'little know what a humbled spirit I bore within me, and how easily I feared I should forgive at the first word.' They little guessed, when they bid me not be so careful and troubled about whatever happened, that all these things were like motes in the sun-beam to me, compared with the hidden thoughts from which my real troubles sprang. When they half laughed at me and half praised me to my father, as being like a mother to these growing lads, they did not know that it was because I spent on them the love I could not spend as a wife, nor how glad I was that my cheek withered, and that years left their marks upon me, that I might fancy myself more and more like their mother indeed. If you see me grow young again, and be made sport of like a girl by these tall youths,' she continued, smiling through her tears, 'you will have to answer for it, Angus. Will you take the venture? You were ever the merry one, however, and my part was to be grave for us both. Are we to play the same part still, to keep the brothers in order?'

In the midst of Angus's reply, the lads burst in crying,

'The laird's bark! the laird's bark! and Mr. Cal-

lum is standing at the landing place, with his feet almost in the water, he is so eager to have the first word. You should have seen him waive us off with his cane.'

'He is welcome to the first word,' said Ella: 'all that matters to us is, who shall have the last.'

CHAPTER VII.

INNOVATIONS.

'Stand back, sir!' cried the laird to Callum, as soon as the boat brought him within speaking distance. 'I always doubt the soundness of a plea which is urged in such a hurry.'

Callum, though much dismayed, ventured to reply that his enemies had told their tale first.

'Through no good will of yours, Callum. I saw the race between your messenger's bark and theirs. I grieve my heart to find that even in a remote corner of the world like this, men cannot live in peace. Angus, I am surprised to find you engaged in a contentious appeal.'

Angus replied, that he was as unwilling as any one to quarrel; but that he would never submit to see the helpless injured.

'I was thinking,' said the laird looking about him, 'that he who has the most cause for complaint is the only absent one.—Ella, where is the lad whom Callum took upon him to chastise?'

'Archie is at home.'

'Not dead or dying, I hope?'

'He is already much recovered, and—'

'What! neither half-killed, nor even shut up in the dark? How little a doleful story may come to when told at noon-day instead of midnight!'

'Much remains to be told,' Ella quietly replied.

'Well, call the boy, and let us hear it at once.'

Ella replied that he was asleep, and that she could not awake him, even at his honor's bidding.

Callum ventured to observe that the old laird would not have suffered himself to be kept from his rest at midnight, and be told the next noon that he must wait the waking of a child. Angus replied that blame should fall where it was due. It was he who had encouraged the lads to seek justice, even at an unseasonable hour; and, though he knew Ella would not wake Archie this day for the king himself, it was he who had told her that the laird would not desire it at the peril of the boy's health.

'You told her right, Angus; and Callum may leave the care of my own dignity to myself. And now to business; for I see I must be judge this morning.'

So saying, the laird proceeded up the beach. All pressed upon him such hospitality as they had to offer;—a resting-place, food, whisky;—and some presented the primitive conveyance of their broad shoulders on which to ascend the steep. He declined accepting any of these favors at present, and pointed to a spot on the skirts of the moor, sheltered from the wind by the remaining wall of a ruined hermitage, and graced and sanctified in the eyes of the people by the stone cross of rude workmanship which retained its place in the building. If the laird had been internally ruffled by the occurrences which had brought him hither, his unpleasant feelings vanished in the presence of the monumental remains which he loved to contemplate. As soon as he had chosen for his place a slab of grey stone under which some one lay buried, half a dozen plaids were ready to sweep away the sand and rubbish which bestrewed it; and the judge took his seat amidst as much deference as if it had been the wool-sack.

'Murdoch!' said the laird, 'you seem to be in great trouble, and as you are the oldest tenant, you have a right to speak first. What is the matter?'

'More than your honor can remedy; but if ye'll please to be merciful, Providence may bring me through yet.'

'Well; let us hear. You cannot pay your rent, I suppose. Are we to have that old story over again?'

'Even so, your honor. We have had such high winds lately that they have been the ruin of me. My seed, both barley and rye, is clean blown away with the soil; and the wall is down, and I have nobody to help me to build it up, for the boys are both tossing in their cribs at this moment, and the Lord only knows whether they will ever come out again except to be laid underground.'

'This is a sad story, Murdoch.' And the laird turned to Callum to ask if the fever was in Garveloch. Callum knew of no sickness in any other house.

'As to your wall,' continued the laird, beginning with the least painful part of the subject, 'I feared this accident would happen one of these days. You had not built it up, I suppose.—No!—It seems strange that while your fields were encumbered with stones and your wall tottering for want of support, you should not have remedied both evils by the simple act of building up your fence. As to the looseness of the soil,—how did you treat it this season?'

Murdoch twirled his bonnet in his hands and looked foolish. 'Did you send in the track of the cattle to collect manure?'

'Yes,' replied Callum, 'that I can testify; they collected a large heap independent of the weed. It darkened the whole window as it lay piled up beside the house.'

'And when was it put into its proper place,—into the ground?'

Murdoch again looked foolish, and Callum again answered for him.

'In very good time, sir. You may be sure I would not let it remain where it might breed a fever.'

Murdoch being called on to explain why his land was in bad condition if properly manured, owned that he had moved the dung-heap to please Mr. Callum; but not having time to manure his fields, had stowed away the dung in the shed next the room where the family lived.—All the farmer's misfortunes were now accounted for. The laird told him that he was unwilling to add to the distress of a man in misfortune, but reminded him how frequently he had been warned that he must quit his farm if his own bad management prevented his having his rent ready.

'I will give you one more chance,' he continued. 'I will provide you with seed (it is not yet too late) on condition that you employ at your own cost such labor on your farm as shall bring it into as good condition as when you took it. You shall not be asked for rent till you have reaped your next crop; and then you may pay it in kind or in money as you like best. This is the utmost indulgence I can allow you, and it is enough; for, if you manage well, you may easily pay for the necessary labor and make up your rent too.'

Murdoch did not know, he said, how he was to hire labor; it was the dearest thing that could be had in Garveloch.—This would have been true a few days before, but it was not the case now. It occurred to Angus that he might so recommend himself to the laird by the management of Murdoch's farm as to obtain employment for himself on advantageous terms the next year. The laird knew a great deal about Angus, and respected his general character very highly, but was not acquainted with his capabilities as a man of business; and the young man rightly believed that if he could testify his skill and industry, he might secure a comfortable settlement under the laird. He offered his services to Murdoch for more moderate wages than would have been asked by any other man within reach, and they were of course gladly accepted. When the laird had declared his intention of sending for medicine, and advice for the two boys, Murdoch's affairs were settled for the present.

Ella next approached to request permission to pay her half-year's dues into the laird's own hands. He smiled and said she need pay only once a year, and might keep her money till Midsummer; but he frowned when she answered that she had rather deal directly with himself, if he would allow it, and take the opportunity while he was at hand, as the money was ready. He declared his displeasure at all quarrels between his steward and his tenants, and was not slow in laying blame on both parties. His decision, when he heard the whole story, was far from satisfactory to any body. He secured good treatment to Archie indeed, and full liberty to do as he liked, but Archie's family thought him much too lenient towards Mr. Callum. Callum was still less pleased to find that he had been in the wrong from first to last.

Angus, to prevent a further outbreak of ill-humor, hastened to bring forward his plea. It was of a nature to please the laird. He complained of the absence of intercourse between the islanders and the people on the mainland, and pointed out the evils arising thence to all parties: the deficiency of some articles of production, and the impossibility of disposing of the surplus of others; the disadvantage

caused to the islanders, whether they bought or sold, by their ignorance of market prices, and the difficulties in the way of social improvement occasioned by such seclusion. He had strong in his mind other difficulties and other woes which had arisen out of this absence of communication; but as he kept these to himself, they only served to animate his eloquence in speaking of mere matters of business.

'What you say is very true,' observed the laird. 'You have here more peat than you can use, while in some of the neighboring islands, the people are half frozen in winter for want of fuel: and Callum tells me that Murdoch's harvest having failed last year, two or three families were obliged to subsist on shell fish for nearly two months, till the men were too weak to work, and several children might have died if Callum had not come his rounds earlier, so as to send for potatoes just in time to save them. He tells me too that the kelp manufacture is mere child's play compared with what it might be made, if a fair market were opened.'

'I wish your honor would be pleased to step down to the shore yonder and see what might be made of the kelping,' said Ronald.

'I will presently. But, Angus, why does nobody make the voyage to Oban? Who prevents it?'

Angus supposed that nobody was sufficiently aware of the advantage: the passage, too, was a dangerous one for the island boats, which were, in his humble opinion, quite unfit for such heavy seas, especially if they had cargoes to take.

'Then why not have a proper vessel, Angus? If it went at regular times to and from Oban, and if, moreover, it touched at some of the neighboring islands so as to discharge their errands likewise, it might surely be made to answer to any one who would undertake the speculation. Why do not you try?'

Angus was strongly disposed to make the attempt, if he could be guaranteed from loss; but it would not do to venture his little capital in the purchase of a boat, unless he were pretty secure that it would not be laid by after a few trips. The laird was willing to enter into the proposed guarantee, so assured was he that the interest of the islanders would induce them to keep up the communication if it was once begun. After some consultation, it was agreed that the new boat should be started the next summer, as soon as Angus should have concluded his engagement with the farmer, and before the fishing and kelping seasons began. It was to make the circuit of the island on a particular day of the week, and to touch wherever custom was likely to be obtained within a reasonable distance. The sale of produce might either be conducted by Angus, or its owners might cross with him and manage their business themselves, as they chose; and the laird engaged that a newspaper should be regularly forwarded to Oban, which should contain the commercial information most useful to his tenants.

'You look very grave, Ella,' said the laird, when this matter was settled. 'You are thinking that this new plan will bring neighbors around you and oblige you to pay rent.'

'No doubt it will, your honor; but I am not afraid. Prices must rise before that comes to pass; and if prices rise, I can afford to pay rent.'

It was a very different consideration which made Ella look grave. She was thinking of the summer storms that sweep the sound, and of the perils of the boisterous sea which lay between Garveloch and Oban. She fancied what the anxiety would be of pacing the shore or breasting the wind on the heights as midnight came on, to watch long and in vain for her husband's return; or to see his boat pitching or driving on the waves, or half swallowed up by them. She shook off these selfish fears, however, and listened to what the laird was saying to her brothers. He was warning them to make the most of their tenure while they had the whole produce to themselves, and not to be in too great a hurry to sell. It might be an important advantage to them to store their produce till a favorable time for selling; viz. in the interval between a rise of prices and the establishment of a rent upon their ground. He ended by proposing to view Ronald's line of shore.

Ronald pointed out that as the sea-weed was to be cut only once in three years, and as it had never yet been made use of in this place, he must profit by this first season at the expense of all the labor that could be spared. He and his brother and sister now gave their chief attention to it, gathering with great care whatever unbruised sea-weed of the right kind was thrown on shore, and cutting diligently at

low-water whenever the sea was sufficiently calm to allow of the weed being properly landed when the tide came in. The hair rope, twisted by Ella, was now brought into use. It was laid at low-water beyond the portion cut, the two ends being brought up and fastened on the shore: and when the whole floated at high-water, the ends were drawn in, and all the weed they enclosed was landed at once. Ronald pointed out several inlets where the weed grew plentifully, sheltered from the surge, and remarked on the advantage of a gradual slope of the shore both for cutting and landing the weed, and for drying it when landed. He showed the situation he had chosen for his fire, and the nook in which he meant to stack the weed as it became dry. The laird having a mind to discover how much the lad knew about his business beyond the mere preparation of the article, asked him a few questions.

'Would it not answer to you, Ronald, to give up some of this large crop to your sister's land for manure?'

'If there was no other manure to be had: but there is plenty of weed thrown on shore after a storm, good enough to lay upon land, but too much bruised to serve for kelp. At present, at least, we have enough for both purposes.'

'Whenever your crop becomes scanty, will you give over kelping, or let the land lie fallow?'

'We must take care of the land in the first place, I suppose, because we are sure of making something by that; but the price of kelp rises and falls so often, that we can never tell what we shall make by it. Angus says, that if more barilla is brought to London from abroad than usual, we may find any day that a cask may sell for next to nothing.'

'But if very little barilla comes from abroad, it may sell very high.'

'Yes, Sir; but we should not know that till the time came for selling, and it would not do to neglect the land in the meanwhile, so little else as we have to depend on. Ella is welcome to help herself out of my stack, as often as the land wants it; but that is not the case just now.'

'How many tons of weed must you have to make a ton of kelp?'

Ronald smiled at the idea of his dealing with so large a quantity as a ton. They that made for the laird, he said, reckoned that twenty-four tons, properly dried, made a ton of kelp; and this might sell for any sum between 7*l.* and 20*l.* according to the state of the market. It was not for him to think of ever making a sum like the lowest of these in one season: but he did think it would be possible, whenever he should have the advantage of knowing how to deal direct with Greenock, to make so much as to be able to improve the moorland on which the pony was now grazing. If he could see that ground turned into a barley field, he thought he should have nothing more to wish.

'Surely,' said the laird, 'there must be much waste in the burning in such a hole as this;—merely a pit, dug in the sand and lined with stones. It would not be difficult to make a kiln, and Fergus could furnish you with peat, if he has enough to spare to sell, as I am told he has; could not you make a saving in this way?'

'We might in one respect, your honor; but we should lose more in another. As it is, the weed is its own fuel entirely; in the other way we should be at the expense of peat, you see.'

'It would have been well if some greater kelp-burners had seen this as clearly as you do, Ronald; and then they would have been saved the expense of building kilns which they cannot afford to use. But one great evil is got rid of by the use of kilns.'

'Your honor means the smell: but a little care may prevent that being a great evil to any but those who tend the fire, and they get used to it.—When we lived northwards, we always had three places at least where we might burn, according as the wind was; and if it so happened that the smoke would blow towards the cottage, Ella used to take Archie, and sometimes my father, to a place in the rocks where they might sleep in their plaids.'

'And no great evil,' said Ella, 'in summer nights when the red twilight gleamed on the peaks till midnight. I shall do it again when the wind is perverse, and the kelping must go on. The worse of it is that Archie loves sleep no better than I on such nights.'

'Is he frightened at being away from home?'

'O, no; but he watches the fires till they smoulder. If it is calm for a few minutes, so that the tall flame can shoot up from among the smoke, you might think you saw that very flame in his eyes.'

'He is ever on the watch for such fires,' said Fergus. 'It was but lately that he pointed to the northern lights one clear evening, and told me that helping time was come again over the sea.'

'Why do you not carry him somewhere out of sight of the fires?' asked the laird. 'Does he know the purpose of the removal too well to be satisfied?'

'He does, your honor: and, more than that, he must not be crossed in his love of what is beautiful to the eyes that God gave him. God has given him pleasures of his own, and he shall never be stinted in them by me.'

Ella would not have spoken of Archie if Mr. Callum had been present. Finding himself not wanted on the shore, he had gone up to the farm to inspect the condition of the family; and now returned to say that the boys were so ill of the fever, that he strongly advised the laird not to enter their dwelling. Ella had, therefore, the honor of entertaining her landlord, which she did as courteously as any mistress of castle and park could have done. She formally invited Mr. Callum also, but he abruptly excused himself, and hastened away.

Archie was still asleep when they returned to the cottage. As the laird stood over him, and observed his flushed face, he offered that the doctor, whom he should immediately send, should examine Archie before he proceeded to the farm; but this Ella declined.

'He wants rest and soothing,' said she, 'and that no strange face should cross him till he has forgotten the last night. There is nothing that gives ease so well as sleep like his; and there are none that can soothe him like myself, if I may say so; and no man shall so much as stroke his head these many days.'

In her heart she added, 'unless it be Angus.'

The laird had no opportunity of showing that he took her hint, for the time arrived for his departure before Archie awoke.

CHAPTER VIII.

SECLUSION NOT PEACE.

Murdoch's day of adversity—a day long anticipated by his landlord—was come at last. The fever ran through the family; one of the boys died, and Murdoch himself and his daughter Meg had the greatest difficulty in struggling through. No use had been made of years of tolerable health and prosperity, to store up any resources against a change of times. Murdoch had neither money, food, nor clothes laid by; the most he ever aimed at was to reproduce his capital; if he did more, the surplus was immediately spent; if less, no exertion was made to restore the balance, and he therefore grew gradually poorer. He had already let some of his land out of cultivation, and got his rent lowered in consequence, with due warning, however, that if the estate was let down any further, he must give up his farm to a better tenant. This winter of illness having consumed more of his little capital, he must have given up at once, if it had not been for Angus's care, skill, and industry. The utmost that all those qualities could do, was to keep up the place in its present extent. It was in vain to think of reclaiming what had become wild, of increasing the stock, or of making any new arrangements of land or buildings; and whatever was effected would not have sufficed to pay the rent and recompense Angus, if the establishment of a communication with a market, and a consequent rise of prices, had not been in prospect. Angus built up the fence, manured the ground, and sowed it with the laird's seed, and then spent the months of winter in bringing the place into such repair as might enable him to proceed to further operations upon the soil in spring.

When Murdoch was so far recovered as to go abroad and see what had been done, he quarrelled with every thing he beheld. This was partly from the fretfulness of sickness, but much more from jealousy of Angus. He felt, but would not own, a considerable surprise at the extent of the repairs, well knowing that there was no money of his with which to carry them on. He affected to be angry at the extravagance, saying that he had always wished to see his place in good condition, but had never thought it right to afford such an outlay; and that they who took upon them to make it might pay the rent. Angus good-humoredly explained that one

part helped another; the stones of the field to build up the wall, the weeds of the shore to manure the soil, the turf of the bog to cover the cow-shed, and so on.

'And pray, how is all to be paid at last,—the laird, and you, and every body?'

'Out of the crops, if at all.'

'Ye may well say, "if at all." The crops never did more than just discharge the rent yet; and here's the funeral, and you, and the doctor, to pay besides.'

'Your barley and oats will sell higher at Oban, or in yon islands, than the price you have reckoned it at with Mr. Callum. When you go with me to sell your crops, or let me sell them for you—'

'You shall never do that, Mr. Angus.'

'As you please, neighbor. As I was saying, it will come to the same thing, if Mr. Callum, knowing you can get a higher price than formerly, takes less for your rent: I shall, of course, be willing to receive my wages in kind, at the same rate; and I hope you may find yourself clear, neighbor, before the next season begins. One ought not to expect more—'

Murdoch laughed bitterly, choosing to suppose that Angus was mocking him. Angus went on,

'Now that you are out of doors again, and have a prospect of being able to work before long, our business will go on faster and more cheerily, and—'

'Cease your mocking!' cried Murdoch, angrily. 'You talk to me of work, and I have no more strength than Rob there, when he creeps out into the sunshine like a field-mouse in March, and slinks back again, at the first breath of wind, like a scarce-fledged sea-fowl.'

'I see you are tired, even now,' said Angus, offering him his shoulder to lean upon. 'You had better sit on the bench, instead of standing to fatigue yourself; but, as I was saying, it is a great thing to have got out at all, and the power to work will come in time, and then all may go as well as ever with your farm.'

Murdoch was in no humor to believe this; he tottered without assistance to a seat, and sat watching with many bitter feelings the exertions of Angus, to whom he owed thanks instead of jealousy for the activity of his labor. An idle and unjust suspicion had entered his mind, and never afterwards quitted it.

'He wants to supplant me,' he said to himself. He plies his spade with as much pleasure as if he was setting his foot on my neck at every stroke. He wants to have the rent fall short that he may get the farm himself, and that is why he tries to flatter me that there will be enough to pay every body; that is why he talks so humbly and smoothly about his own wages; that is why his goods are all brought here and stored in Ella's cottage instead of being landed in Lorn where all his kin used to live. O aye, he thinks to settle here. But if I cannot keep my farm, that is no reason why he should have it; and Mr. Callum is against him, which is a good thing. I have long meant to give up, and I will do it now, unknown to him, that Callum may let the farm to somebody else over his head. I'll be beforehand with him; and, as for what I am to do myself, it will go hard if I cannot get my living by fishing if a woman like Ella can.'

This scheme was no whim of the moment. Murdoch had turned it over in his mind as he lay in the fever, irritated by confinement to which he was lit to the accustomed, harassed by grief, and ready to look on the dark side of every thing. While recovering, he had softened towards Angus, and been sorry for the harsh thoughts he had entertained of him; but mortified vanity now recalled his jealousy, and he was ready, for the sake of baffling the suspected designs of a supposed enemy, to take a precipitate step which might ruin his family. He now determined to probe the intentions of Angus, and himself played the traitor in trying to discover treachery which did not exist.

'I wonder now, said he, the next time Angus came within hearing, 'I wonder how you would set about the management of this place, so well as you think of it,—if you were the tenant.'

'The first thing I should do,' said Angus, looking up into the sky and watching a black speck which was wheeling just beneath the fleecy clouds, 'would be to get at yon eagle that does so much mischief among the fowls. I think the eyrie might be easily found, and should be if you were strong enough to fasten the rope.'

Murdoch answered impatiently, supposing that Angus wished to evade his question: 'I am not asking you about the fowls, man. I want to know

what you would do with the land if you had a long lease of it?'

'I would spend all the capital I have upon it, and get more as soon as I could, and improve the powers of the soil to the utmost, for I am sure it would repay me; at least, if a market was opened.'

'Aye, that would be very well if you had a long lease; but if it was a short one?'

'I should still do the same. I would keep the whole in complete repair, and try to remedy the lightness of the soil; and when I had got one good crop, I would apply the profit to taking in again the land that has been let out of tillage, and—'

'That is, you would do exactly as you are doing now till you could get power to do more.'

'Exactly so.'

'What a fool he takes me for!' said Murdoch to himself. 'He does not trouble himself to use any deceit.—But, Angus, you forget that your rent would be raised presently, and would take away all your profit. You see mine has been lowered since I let yon fields out of tillage.'

'And have your profits increased again? Rent follows prices instead of leading them. Your rent was lowered in consequence of your losing, and mine would be raised in consequence of my gaining; so that I should have clear gain at first as you had clear loss.'

'Hold your tongue about my losses!' cried Murdoch, in a greater passion than ever.

'I beg your pardon, neighbor,' said Angus, 'I forgot for the moment that you were not well yet, and I was led on by what you were saying about rent. To put you in heart again, then—when I was standing looking abroad from yonder crag, I thought what a fine thing might be made of this farm, when once a means of conveyance is set up.'

'I dare say ye did,' muttered Murdoch.

'I saw far off on the north shore, grown men and women as well as children picking up shellfish, and I thought how glad they would be to barter for oatmeal or barley if a boat touched regularly with supplies. I looked into all the deep dells, and not a patch of tillage did I see over the whole island but here, and Ella's single field. I saw the few lean cattle on the moorland there, and thought that if the pasture was improved as it might be, what a fine thing it would be for us all to be supplied with meat. Then the sea towards Oban looked quite tempting, for it was as blue as in summer, and the islands as fair as they seemed when I was a boy, and every rock so well known to me, above or below the water.'

'Well; what has all this to do with my farm?'

'Why, that I longed to be taking my first trip; going with my vessel heaving slowly over the swell heavily laden with all our produce, and then coming back dancing over the billows as if it was no more than a skiff, and with little other weight to carry than myself and the winnings in my pocket.'

'And you would wish me joy and long life in my farm when you brought me my money, I suppose?'

'To be sure I should; as I do now, and ever have done. Murdoch!' he continued after a pause, 'I cannot let you think me such a fool as not to discern that you have some jealousy against me. I have seen enough of the world to know what is meant by such a smile and speech as yours at this moment. Don't let us have any quarrel, for I know you cannot bear it just now; but do keep in mind that I like plain speaking, and would rather know at once when I have offended you.'

Murdoch waived him away contemptuously with his staff, calling his wife to come and hear the news that Angus loved plain speaking. She joined in the laugh, and the invalid Meg came creeping forth from the corner of the hearth, braving the open air for the sake of witnessing the quarrel,—a frequent amusement of highland women. Angus meanwhile was wondering what all this could mean, but was little more tempted to be angry with Murdoch in his present state than he would have been with a cross child. Presently it occurred to him that they might be offended at his never having alluded to his prospect of marrying Ella, they being relations of her's, though very distant ones.

'You mean, neighbors,' said he, 'that you would have liked me to be more open about my future plans.'—Here they exchanged glances.—'But I left them to be told by the one, from whom you had a better title to hear them.'

'So he has spoken to Callum already,' thought Murdoch, 'and has the art to be beforehand with me after all.'

'If you have heard all from that one, or by some accident before you learned it from me, you ought

not to blame me, for you could hardly expect me to be the first to mention it.

'It would not have been delicate, I warrant, Mr. Angus.'

'I think not, considering how the parties stand to each other: but I am sure if I had thought you would have taken offence, I would have told you long ago.'

'And pray how long has it all been settled?'

'Since the autumn.'

'From the very time you landed?'

'From the very day after.'—Looks more fierce than ever.

'And pray how was your proposal received?'

'Nay,' cried Angus, now angry in his turn, 'you push me too far. I have been meek enough while your questions and your sneers regarded only myself. I shall not satisfy your curiosity further, and I am sorry I have borne so much. You may well laugh at delicacy, for you do not know what it is.'

So saying, he took a rope with him and went out to war against the eagle, intending to ask Fergus to accompany him with his gun and to remain out the whole day, as the best means of avoiding deadly feuds. He left the Murdochs wondering that after bearing quietly so much reproach and contempt, he should fly off at last through delicacy to Mr. Callum. Never was misunderstanding more complete.

Ella was in the field when Angus appeared on the height. She saw by his step that something had ruffled him, and she hastened towards him to know what had happened. His first words were,—

'Where is Fergus? can he go with me eagle-nesting?'

'How happens it that you have time for sport?' replied Ella. 'I thought the season would be too short for your tasks at the farm.'

'Our poultry suffers,' replied Angus. 'We must demolish the eyrie.'

'That is not your only reason, I am sure. Tell me what has happened.—The laird says rightly that neighbors who ought to be the more friendly because they are few, are often the first to quarrel; but you would not quarrel, especially with the Murdochs, and less than ever now?'

'I would not willingly. I tried all I could. But, Ella, when did you tell them of our plans?'

'Never,' said Ella, coloring: 'nor did I mean it till summer.'

'Somebody has told, however.'

'Impossible; nobody knows it but the two boys; and they might be trusted as if they were dumb.'

Angus explained, and both conjectured, and the two lads passed their word that they had never told. There was no catching the little bird that had carried the matter; so the two sportsmen set out in chase of the great bird which was their further aim.

'O, Angus,' said Ella: 'are ye certain your eye is as steady and your foot as sure as when this was your daily sport?'

'Fear nothing,' said Angus, smiling. 'I long to be dangling over the surf again, with the sea fowl flapping and screaming about me, and I feeling myself lord, like a lion in a wood of chattering monkeys. You see we take heed to stake and rope, and that done, all is safe. I will bring you home an egg that shall beat all that Archie ever gave you.'

'I am glad your sport will be out of his sight, or he would be wanting to imitate you. Do you know, we have had to give him a cask to stow his goods in, as we pack our hearings and the kelp. Ronald has carried it over to the Storr and put it under a ledge where it cannot get wet, and Archie is busy filling it to-day.'

'He learns to imitate more and more.'

'He does; and so haste away lest he should come and find out what that rope is for. O, be back before the dusk, lest I should doubt your care for Ronald and me.'

'I will remember Ronald,' said Fergus, laughing as he shouldered his gun.—'I leave the rest to Angus.'

Angus found that his favorite sport had lost none of its charms from having been long unpractised. He forgot his wrath when he found himself alone with Fergus in the wild region which the sea-eagles had chosen for their abode. He loved it all the better for having beheld other scenes of sublimity with which he could contrast it. While climbing steep rocky paths, or springing from one point to another where there was no path at all, while looking round in vain for traces of any but marine vegetation, and casting a glance over an expanse which appeared to have no boundary, he related to Fergus what he had seen in the forests of Canada; how the grass and

underwood grow tangled and high, so as to make it difficult to proceed a step; how the trees prevent any thing being seen beyond the stems around; and how, by climbing the highest, no other view can be obtained than closewoven tree-tops spreading, apparently so firm that you might walk over them, as far as the horizon.

'Hist!' said Fergus. 'There he sits! his mate is just below on the nest, no doubt. Shall I fire, or wait till he soars?'

'Wait!' said Angus; and he paused to watch the majestic bird, perched on the extreme edge of a jutting crag, and apparently looking abroad for prey. He was motionless, his dusky wings being folded, his black shining talons clasping the verge of the rock, and his large brilliant eye seeming fixed on some object too remote to be distinguishable by human sight. Fergus was going to speak again, but his companion stopped him, only allowing him to intimate by describing a hook, bending his fingers and shuddering, how he pitied the prey that was even now fated to perish under such a beak and talons. Surprised that they were unperceived, and wishing to remain so, Angus pulled his companion back under the brow of the crag to await the departure of the monarch of this solitude. Presently they heard a rushing sound,—whether from a blast among the crags or from the flight of the eagle, they did not for a moment know; but they immediately saw him soaring high and abroad with that peculiar mode of flight which shows that the eagle is not winging his way homewards, but that there is prey beneath. His cry was distinctly heard, even when he was scarcely visible, and it was answered by one so near them that they both started.

'Now, now,' said Angus, 'while he is afar, up, Fergus, and fix the stake! Is your gun loaded? you must shoot her as she hovers, while I take the egg.'

'Wait one moment,' cried Fergus. 'He will drop this instant. There, there! see him pounce! He drops plump as if he was made of lead. It is but an instant since he was almost too high and the surge too low to be heard, and now he is like a speck among the foam below.'

With all speed, the stake was made fast, the rope secured at one end to this support, and at the other round Angus's waist. When the knots had been tried and found to be firm, the sportsmen raised a shrill cry to alarm the mate, and the one prepared to take aim and the other to descend as soon as she should rise. In the midst of the din she rushed forth, was immediately struck beneath the wing, and fell fluttering, tumbling, and screaming, from one point to another of the rocks, mingling her dying cry with the distant echoes of the shot. Angus was by this time scrambling to find the nest, sometimes dangling at the end of the rope and buffeted by the sudden gales as they passed, sometimes finding a step for the foot and a hold for the hand, and a resting place where he could pause for an instant. When he discovered the nest, his heart almost smote him for thus taking by storm the palace of the king of the birds; till the sight of scattered feathers and of a few bones reconciled him to the destruction of the formidable enemies of the farm-yard. The large egg was yet warm. Angus put it in his pouch, sent the stray feathers down the wind, cleared out the hole completely, so as to leave no temptation to the enemy to return, and then ascended.

'You have been quick,' observed Fergus, 'yet there he is, just below yon cloud, and with a prey in his talons.'

'One can make more speed with an eagle's nest than with a gannet's,' replied Angus. 'One is not dizzied with the flapping of more wings than one can count, or stunned with the din of more cries than one's brain will easily bear. Yonder bird is truly the monarch of the wild now. I could pity him, but for the thought of our fowls.'

'If I were he,' said Fergus, 'I would finish my lonely meal, and away to find another mate.'

'So would not I,' said Angus; 'as long as my dead mate lay below, I would sit all day and watch; and when the tides sweep her bones away, I would build again in the same nook for her sake.'

'But do not you mean to carry her home?' asked Fergus. 'She lies within reach from the shore. Let us go back that way.'

'With all my heart, and as we have time, we may as well make a circuit by the bog, and send a shot each among the wild fowl. Perhaps Murdoch may thank me for bringing such game when he has forgotten my offences.'

'If he does not thank you,' said Fergus, 'I know somebody else who will.'

The bird they had shot was in the agonies of death when they arrived where she lay. Her claws were rigid, a film was over her piercing eye; a faint gasping through the open beak, and a feeble fluttering of the extended wings as she lay on her back, were the only signs of life. Angus put her out of pain, slung her over his shoulder, and proceeded to his sport where sport never fails,—among the pools where wild-fowl collect.

No alarm was excited by their appearance on the margin of the reedy pool where the fowl were diving, splashing, sailing or brooding, as suited their several inclinations. They seemed as tame as farm-yard ducks and geese, and were, indeed, little more accustomed to the report of a gun than they; for Fergus had seldom time for sport, and no one in Garveloch but himself and his brother ever fired a shot. He now offered his gun to Angus.

'You disdain such game after having brought down an eagle,' said Angus, laughing. 'All in their turns say I; so now for it.' And another moment made prodigious havoc and bustle among the fowl. As the smoke was wafted from over the pool and slowly dispersed, what a flitting and skimming, and huddling together was there on the surface and in the inlets; what a clattering and cackling of the living, what a feeble cry from the dying, while the dead floated in the eddy made by their terrified companions!

'Two, four, five at the first shot! Well done, Angus! If the bird-king be still watching us, what murderous wretches he will think us!'

'He will revenge his species perhaps when the darkness, that is a thick curtain to us, is only a transparent veil to him. He can carry off a kid or a fowl at midnight as well as when he has been staring at the sun. But I hope he will go and seek society, for we have no more prey to spare him. Come, take your aim, and then let us be gone, for the shadows are settling down in the hollows, and we have a difficult way to make homewards.'

Ella was watching for them; not that they were late, but she had new perplexities to relate. She had been up to the farm to try to re-establish a good understanding; for which purpose she made a greater effort and was more ready with concessions than she would have been if the family had been well and prosperous. On explaining to them the reasons why she had not communicated her intended connexion with Angus, she was surprised, and scarcely knew whether or not to be vexed, to find that they had no suspicion of the matter. The interview threw no light whatever on the cause of offence; and Ella came away understanding nothing more than that they seemed to think themselves injured, and had refused to let Angus set foot on their premises again till they should have seen Mr. Callum.

The affair was, of course, more mysterious than ever to Angus, who, however, was less troubled at it than his betrothed.

'I will work for you and Ronald instead, till Mr. Callum comes, or till my boat is ready for her first trip. You will neither of you pay me with abuse, and turn me out as if I had robbed you.'

'We shall not be made fretful by illness, I trust.'

'True: thank you, for putting me in mind of that. I will nourish no anger, and will go at once if they send for me. If they do, I hope it will be while my game is good. I shall be all the better received, if I carry a handful of wild ducks, which invalids like better than smoked geese that eat as tough as theirs: I wish they would learn from you, Ella, how to cure their geese,—and many other things.'

CHAPTER IX.

A FOOL'S ERRAND.

The wild ducks were still fresh when Angus was sent for, as it so happened that Murdoch's wife came within an hour to say that the cattle were in the rye-field, (Murdoch having left the gate open,) and it was beyond the feeble strength of any of the household to drive them out. Angus good-naturedly refrained from any reference to what had passed, returned, and saw the mischief the farmer's carelessness had done, and made no complaint thereof, but took his seat as usual beside the hearth, and amused the invalids with an account of his day's adventures. The farmer being, for some time after this, as irritable as ever, Angus avoided all mention

of their quarrel, the cause of which, therefore, remained as great a mystery as ever. Murdoch saw no mystery in it, so prepossessed was he with the idea that his assistant meant to turn him out and triumph over him; and he founded all his arrangements on this notion. His jealousy was ever on the watch, and he felt he should have no rest till he could see Mr. Callum, give up his farm on condition that Angus should not have it, and obtain a promise of a cottage where he and his family might live by plying their boat and nets. When Angus returned from the field, one chill, dreary evening, he found Murdoch at the door, looking out for him.

'Where have ye been so late, Angus? It has been nearly dark this hour, and a killing fog.'

'I kept to my work to the last minute, neighbor, that's all. I had a particular reason for working hard to-day—'

'Aye, and every day, I think,' interrupted Murdoch. 'Only remember that this desperate hard work is no desire of mine, and it is not to come into your wages.'

'Well, well, but you will not let one speak,' replied Angus smiling. 'I was going to say that I have been working for to-day and to-morrow, too, as I shall be on the sea the greater part of the day. Mr. Callum is in Scarba, and as I want to see him, I must be off early in the morning; and if I should not find him directly, I may not be back till night.'

'Mr. Callum landed in Scarba! Who told you?'

Angus pointed to the end of his telescope, which peeped out of his bosom. Murdoch peevishly observed, that Angus seemed to see and hear more than anybody in all the range of the islands.

'Very likely as to the seeing,' replied Angus, 'for there is not such another glass as this in all the islands, I fancy. I thank my old friend, the surveyor, for it every time I use it,—that is, every day of my life.'

'What do you want with Mr. Callum?' asked Murdoch, abruptly.

'What matters it to you?' answered Angus, looking steadily at him. 'I take your wages for doing your work, but I am not answerable to you for my private affairs.'

'O certainly: I only asked because I must go with you to-morrow. I want to see Mr. Callum, too.'

'Surely,' said Angus kindly, 'you are not strong enough for the sea yet; and besides, Mr. Callum may not be near the shore, and there may be miles to walk to overtake him. Let me do your business when I do my own.'

Murdoch laughed scornfully at this proposal, and yet more, when Angus offered to persuade Mr. Callum to come to Garveloch. The farmer was bent on making the attempt, and was not deterred by the dreary weather of the next morning.

They landed in Scarba before they supposed that Mr. Callum would have left his bed, but found that he intended to embark early from the opposite side of the island, after having slept in the interior, and that if they wished to reach him, they must take horse, and proceed as fast as possible. There was but one horse to be had; and Murdoch, weary as he already was, would not lose sight of Angus for an instant. He insisted on mounting behind him, and thus they set off. The roughness of the roads, and of the horse's pace, irritated Murdoch, as every untoward circumstance, however trifling, was apt to do at present. From being sullen, he became rude, surly, and passionate, till Angus began to consider what mode of treatment would bring his companion to his senses.

'Take heed how you ride, I say, Angus. If you can bear jogging to pieces, I can't.'

'The road is terribly rough indeed, neighbor; but we shall find an even reach when we have turned yon point.'

'Even! do you call this even?' cried Murdoch at the end of a quarter of an hour, when they began to descend a steep.

'I did not answer for more than the reach we have passed, neighbor: and, what is more, neither that nor this was of my making.'

'But it was of your choosing; and never tell me that there is no better road than this across Scarba. You chose it to revenge yourself on me because you could not make me stay behind.'

'You're mistaken, neighbor.'

'Mistaken! I mistaken! Stop the horse, Angus: stop him this minute! I won't ride another step with you.'

'Do you mean that you wish to be set down?' asked Angus, who thought he now saw a way to tame his companion. 'Do you wish to get off here?'

'To be sure—this moment, this very moment. I won't ride another step with you.'

Angus let him get down, and proceeded leisurely. In two minutes, he heard Murdoch calling him, as he had expected.

'Let me get up again,' said he in an altered tone; and he began to mutter something about the way being far for walking, and then held his peace till they overtook Mr. Callum.

This important personage frowned on Angus, and cut short his conference with him as much as he decently could. He smiled on Murdoch when he heard the nature of his business, and favored him with an audience of unusual length. He could not say, in answer to Murdoch's suspicions, that Angus had ever asked for the farm; but they agreed that he certainly meant to do it, and that it would be a great triumph to disappoint him. Mr. Callum had a distant cousin who was in want of just such a farm as Murdoch's, and he had no doubt he could influence the laird to let it be thus disposed of, and to build a dwelling for the Murdoch's where they might pursue their fishing. If so, the workmen should begin to build without delay, and it should be seen whether Murdoch's fishing might not begin as soon as Angus's traffic with his new boat, which was the talk of all Garveloch and the neighboring isles.—Mr. Callum would not give Angus the pleasure of hearing this, or the progress which was making in the building of the little packet; but he described to Murdoch all its conveniences, and beauties, and told him how the laird himself made frequent inquiries about it, and had been more than once to see it on the stocks.

The two plotters having by mutual sympathy put themselves in mutual good humor, were full of consideration for each other and pointedly neglectful of every body else, when they returned from their long conference. Callum ordered refreshment for Murdoch, and recommended rest without consulting the convenience of Angus; and the farmer strove to contrast his own deference to the great man's wishes with Angus's independence of manner and speech. Both moralized on the beauty of sincerity and the foulness of treachery, till the supposed plotter but real plottee yawned without ceremony. They had rather he should have blushed or trembled; but his yawns furnished a new topic to Murdoch on his way home. In every respite from a hard trot on land and rolling on sea, he discoursed on audacity as an aggravation of malice, till, having reached his own door, he underwent a fainting-fit with a heroism worthy of a better cause.

CHAPTER X.

WHAT IS TO HAPPEN NEXT?

No contrast could be more complete or more refreshing to Angus than the state of affairs below to that which he was constantly witnessing at the farm. With Ella and her brothers everything prospered; and their external prosperity was not alloyed by troubles from within. The boys used in former days to think there was no fault in Ella, and would have been highly offended if any one had spoken of a time when they would love her better, and be happier with her. That time had, however, come. They were grateful to her for the new virtue to which time gave rise,—the virtue of remembering that they were no longer children, and of surrendering her authority accordingly, by natural degrees, and before the change was demanded or even wished for. She waited to be consulted about their little plans, asked their advice about her own, and still better, not only smiled indulgently upon their mirth as formerly, but took part in it as if years were rolling backward over her head. On her part, she felt that her brothers were her friends because they loved Angus devotedly; and, as for Angus, all was, of course, right in his eyes in a household whose chief bond was attachment to himself and devotion to the interests which were most dear to him. He passed every half hour that he could spare from his duties at the farm among his friends below, now pointing out what ought to be done in the field, now helping Ronald to strew and dry and stack his weed, now cutting peat with Fergus, now singing songs or climbing rocks with Archie, but oftenest talking with Ella in the cottage. He never could carry his point of rowing her out to fish. She always declared that it would

keep him absent from the farm too long, and that she had had experience enough in managing her nets to perform all the labor of that kind that would be necessary till the herrings came again. She could not however prevent his following her with his eyes. He now prized his excellent glass more than ever, and twenty times in a morning he would fix it in the direction of her boat, and watch and admire her proceedings. How delicately and securely she kept clear of every sunken rock, how steadily she plied her oars against wind and tide, how courteously she answered a salute from a passing skiff, how firmly she stood on the thwarts to throw her nets, how powerfully she drew them in, how evidently she enjoyed setting her bark with its head to the wind, and making every sudden gust serve her purpose and help to bring her home! All this Angus saw; and seeing it, pronounced that there was no more fitting occupation for such a woman as Ella than fishing: but then, there were few such women; and he smiled at the thought. He had seen young ladies angling in a trout stream; and this was pretty sport enough: but here was an employment requiring strength, presence of mind, dexterity, and patience; it was therefore a fitting employment for such an one as Ella, and none but such as Ella could pursue it with her success.

That success was great and well husbanded. Ella remembered that this was, perhaps, the only year that she might appropriate the whole produce, and she therefore stored what she could as capital to improve the quantity and quality of her produce when she should hold her croft or lease. She hoped to have money to lay out in improving the soil, and not only to keep her nets and casks and boat in repair, but to purchase a better boat and various conveniences for procuring and salting a larger quantity of fish. She wished her brothers to do the same; and, to set them going, made certain purchases of each. She paid Fergus for whatever fuel was wanted for her own purposes, over and above that which was used for the common convenience of the household. She bought weed to manure her field from Ronald, and was pleased to find that he applied his little fund in taking in the lot of moorland which he always looked forward to rendering productive. She went every day to see what was done, and often listened to Angus's prophecy that it might be made a very serviceable field in time, and would probably yield enough the next season to prove that it was worth the tillage.

Thus were affairs proceeding when Angus appeared with a face of surprise, one fine spring evening, and asked who could be coming to settle in the next cove, round the point. As they did not know what he meant, he proceeded to explain that a dwelling was being built just above the beach. Ronald had not been visiting his shore for some days, and knew neither of the arrival of workmen with their rude materials, nor of any business of the kind going forward in the neighborhood. Nothing could be learned from the workmen, more choice in respect of indolence and awkwardness than even the Highland workmen in general. All they could tell was that they came by Mr. Callum's orders, that they were to build a house with two rooms of certain dimensions, and to get the work finished as fast as possible, for the purpose of being entered by the tenant at Midsummer. Murdoch only smiled when Angus told the fact on his return, and said that they must ask Mr. Callum what the new house was for.

'Suppose,' he continued, 'your packet-boat, that you reckon such an advantage, should have tempted somebody to come and fish in rivalry of Ella! What would you say then?'

'What I have said before,—the more the better, while there is produce and a market. A market once opened, there is room for many; and then there are all the advantages of neighborhood and traffic, while there is still enough for everybody, and will be for a long time to come. Ella will be very happy to pay rent, if at the same time she can sell her produce to better advantage, and buy what she wants cheaper, and with more ease, and have good neighbors around her.'

'We shall see all about it when Mr. Callum comes,' was Murdoch's reply.

'Yes, every thing is to be done when Mr. Callum comes,' said Angus, smiling. 'This new house is to be occupied, and Ella and the boys are to have a lease, and—'

'And you, Angus?—'

'And I am to take my first trip in my packet-boat, and—' Here he smiled again, for he was thinking of another event which was to be connect-

ed with this first trip; but Murdoch, as usual, misunderstood him, and took this for a smile of malice. 'And I,' continued Angus, 'am to be paid my dues, neighbor, I hope.'

'That you shall be, I promise you,' answered Murdoch, to whom the smile of malice properly belonged.

It was observed that the Murdochs took great interest in the progress of this new dwelling. They were now all as able to work as they had ever been, the spring weather having restored their strength; but their invalid habits accorded too well with the taste of the family to be readily given up. The father still muffled himself in his plaid, and sat with folded arms on a large stone on the beach, looking with half-shut eyes at the builders, and leaving Angus to work his own pleasure at the farm. Murdoch's wife still complained as much of her fatigues and cares as if the cribs were yet occupied by patients in the fever. Rob still kept his fingers in his mouth and lay in the sun, when the sun shone, or before the fire when the day was foggy. Meg and her sister still disregarded their mother's troubles, and whenever they could make their escape, ran down to play pranks with the workmen, and to do mischief to their work as soon as they turned their backs. All were clamorous alike when anything went wrong,—which happened every day,—and blame was divided between the two who alone kept matters going at all,—the farmer's wife and the farmer's man. If the poultry were missing, the cattle trampling the corn, the pig oversetting the milk-pails, the eggs broken among the oatmeal, the farming utensils injured or not to be found, there was a contention who should rail the loudest at mother or Angus; and the only means of restoring quiet was to turn out the young folks into the yard. Their father alone was strong enough both in limb and will to do this—their mother not having bodily strength, nor Angus inclination for a scuffle. Even this extreme measure only removed the evil one degree, for the boy and girls, having pushed in vain at the door, and thrown everything within reach at the window, (which being unglazed, received little injury,) ran down to plague the builders below, as they had plagued the authorities above. Murdoch often swore that it was time to give up farming, for it was a kind of life to kill a peaceable man like him, and then he appealed to Angus whether he did not say truth; and when Angus could not agree with him, the usual reply of the bitter laugh was sure to come.

At length, just before Midsummer-day, news arrived that Angus's boat was on its way, and that he might go in two days and meet her off the coast below Scarba, and bring her home to her destination himself. Mr. Callum sent word at the same time that he should land in Garveloch the next day from Oban, and expected that every one would be ready to transact business so as to occasion no delay. Nobody wished for delay. Murdoch fancied that he should find ease and domestic peace in a change of employment, and had already thrown his pride behind him. Angus believed himself within three days of the marriage on which all his hopes had been built for many years. Ella contented herself with saying that her rent was ready; and the lads were eager to be in possession of the lease which should secure to their sister and themselves the fruits of their industry.

CHAPTER XI.

UNDERSTAND BEFORE YOU COMPLAIN.

'Angus!' said Murdoch, the next morning, 'look through your glass, and tell me if you see Mr. Callum's boat yet. The day is none of the clearest, but there is a gleam passing over the sound at this moment.'

The mountains were wholly hidden, and a dark gray cloud hung round the horizon; but, after a little patient watching, Angus saw a boat emerging from the mist, and observed that a sail was hoisted and began to swell with the breeze which was chasing the fogs.

'I have not seen such a bark since the laird left us,' observed Angus; 'and she is full of people and heavily laden. There is company coming, unless Mr. Callum is bringing over the tenants of the new house down below.'

'That can hardly be, Angus; for the tenant of that house stands at your elbow.'

'Well, you can keep a secret, I must own,' said Angus, laughing. 'However, I am truly glad, neighbor, that you think so much better of your affairs than you did as to venture on following two occupations.'

When Murdoch explained that he was going to quit the farm this very day, and should have no further interest in it after receiving an equivalent for his growing crops, he was surprised to see how pleased Angus looked, and asked the reason.

'You know how much I wish for more neighbors,' was the reply, 'and for improved tillage and increased traffic, and you cannot therefore wonder that I am glad to find that the soil is likely to be taken care of now that I have done my best for it.'

'But are you not vexed to give it up, Angus? Would not you like to have kept it yourself?'

'I!' said Angus. 'I have something else to do. My packet and Ella's farm will be as much as I can manage.'

'Well, I always thought you wished to keep the management of these fields!'

'I wonder at that. Our engagement terminates to-day, you know. Was not that made clear from the beginning, neighbor?'

'O yes,' Murdoch had no more to say. So Angus proceeded to Ella's dwelling, where he had promised to be present when the lease was talked over.

Mr. Callum appeared immediately after landing, leaving the new tenants and the Murdochs to settle themselves each in their dwelling,—a proceeding which took very little time where there was but a small stock of furniture, and where nobody dreamed of cleaning an empty house before it was again occupied.

Mr. Callum explained that blanks were left in the lease, which were to be filled up when the parties should have agreed upon the yearly rent to be paid. It was necessary that he should survey the place afresh, and that they should know that they no longer had the fishery to themselves. Ella was prepared for this; but not so Ronald, for finding that by tilling his piece of moorland he had created a rent on his sister's field. It was in vain that he wished he had let it alone at present, that he remonstrated, that he grew angry: Mr. Callum was right, and kept his temper, and was moreover supported by Angus and Ella against the opposition of the two lads.

'But Ella had nothing to do with it,' argued Ronald. 'It comes into my share, and it is very hard that she should have to pay for what I have taken it into my head to do.'

'This is no concern of the laird's or mine,' replied Callum. 'We let the whole to your sister, and all we have to do is to ascertain the difference in the productiveness of different parts, and to charge according to the average.'

'Besides,' observed Angus, 'the case would have been the same if Murdoch or any other body else had tilled the moor. Rent is not an arbitrary demand of the landlord, but a necessary consequence of the varying qualities of the soil.'

Callum grew very civil towards Angus at once.

'You have seen much of the world, Mr. Angus; and I dare say you have found discontent wherever you went upon this subject of rent. The farmers will have it that the landlord lowers their profits.'

'And the people,' observed Angus, 'that rent is an arbitrary tax imposed on the consumer: each of which notions is as mistaken as the other.'

'I cannot say,' observed Ella, 'that it is the laird that lessens my profits. He asked for no rent while my field was the lowest soil tilled; and he never would have asked it, if a worse land had not been taken into cultivation. It is therefore the different degree of fertility which causes rent, and not the will of the landlord.'

'And when the people complain,' said Angus, 'that rent is paid by the consumer as an arbitrary tax, they forget or do not know that rent is the consequence and not the cause of high price. Your barley bannocks and Murdoch's look pretty much alike on the table, and would sell for the same price; but yours are produced at near double the cost of his, and therefore Murdoch pays the laird a part of the profits of his.'

'And very fair,' observed Callum; 'and so it will be with your fish in a little while, Mrs. Ella. Murdoch will sell fish which look like yours, and at the same price; but it will have cost him more time and labor to get them, and therefore the laird calls on you for a part of the profits which you have till now kept to yourself, and would have kept still

if the fish had not brought a good enough price to tempt Murdoch to try his luck.'

Angus hoped that rent would go on to rise, being, as it is, a symptom of prosperity. Ronald wondered he could say so; for his part, he wished there was no such thing as rent.

Angus explained that as rent rises in consequence of a rise of prices, and a rise of prices shows that the article is in request, and that there are purchasers able to buy it, a rise of rent is a symptom of wealth, though many people err in supposing it a cause.

Mr. Callum observed that many wished for an abolition of rent, because they thought high prices an evil in every case.

'Well,' said Fergus, 'surely every body had rather pay little than much for a peck of oatmeal.'

'That depends on what causes the prices to be low or high,' replied Callum. 'If I take upon myself to forbid any body in these islands to buy oatmeal in Lorn when they have not enough at home, or if a bad season should make a scarcity, and prices should rise in consequence, such a rise of prices would be an evil, because the people would not have any more wealth to give in exchange than if the meal was plentiful. But if (which is a very different case) farmers find that their customers have money enough to buy more and more oatmeal, and make it worth the farmers' while to take poorer and poorer soils into cultivation, the consequent rise of price is no evil. It not only shows that wealth is increasing, but also helps to increase it: it causes oats to grow where only heather grew before.'

'But after all,' said Ronald, 'the landlord gets all the benefit of the change. He grows richer and richer, the more prices rise.'

'Not so,' replied Angus. 'Do not you remember my telling you that there is a perpetual tendency to render the productiveness of land more equal by improvements in the art of cultivation? and rent depends not on the quantity produced, but on the inequality in the productiveness of soils. An estate which once yielded one-third of its produce to the landlord may afterwards yield him only one-fourth, and then again one-fifth, though he may receive a larger amount of rent each time.'

'This has actually been the case,' said Callum; 'and therefore it is a mistake to say that the landlord has all the advantage of a rise of prices.'

'I should like to know,' said Fergus, 'what would happen if landlords had no rent, and so bread became cheaper.'

'If land owners gave away their land! Very reasonable truly!' exclaimed Callum.

'I rather think,' said Angus, 'that the first consequence would be that there would soon be no landlords. All land would be in the possession of those who would cultivate it themselves, and then, in consequence of a fall of prices, inferior lands would be let out of tillage, there would be less food raised, and things would go back to the state they were in centuries ago.'

'But if not,' persisted Fergus, 'if they did not sell their land, but lent it without receiving any pay, bread would be cheaper surely, and that would be a good thing.'

'Far from it,' replied Angus. 'The next thing would be that we should have a famine.'

'A famine, from bread being cheaper!'

'Yes; for you must remember that we could not make the ground yield in a hurry any quantity of grain we might happen to want. We have already seen that land would not produce more for rent being abolished, and we shall soon see that it would produce less: and if less was produced while the price was so lowered as to tempt people to consume more, a famine would soon overtake us.'

'If,' said Ella, 'we have no more oatmeal in the islands than will last till next harvest at the present price, and if people are tempted to use more by the price being lowered, do not you see that the supply will fall short before harvest? And then again, the lowering of the price will have made it no longer worth while to till much that is tilled now, and there will be still less produced next year.'

'In order to keep up the same extent of tillage,' said Angus, 'how high must the price rise again?'

'To what it is now, to be sure,' replied Ronald. 'I see what you mean;—that we must come round to rent-price again, even if the landlords did not take rent. So, Mr. Callum, I beg your pardon for being angry about Ella's field; and I will say no more against rent being paid for it, or for my line of shore, or for whatever will bear proper rent.'

'Your sister has made you a sensible lad,' was

Mr. Callum's reply, 'and that is more than I can say for most lads I meet in the islands. They grumble at me, and tell all strangers about the hardship of paying high rents, and the shame that rich men should empty the pockets of the poor.'

'And what do strangers say?' inquired Ella.

'They look with contempt upon the tumble down dirty huts in which the people live, and ask what rent; and when they hear, they hold up their hands and cry out upon the laird.'

'Not distinguishing, I suppose, between the real and nominal rent.'

'Just so. They do not inquire how much is for the fishery, and how much for the land, and how much for the kelping shore, and how very little for the house; but they run away with the idea that the total rent is for the roof and four walls, and tell their friends at home how hard the Highland proprietors are upon their tenantry.'

'But is it not possible to make the people understand the true state of the case?'

Callum said he had never tried, for they were a stupid, unmanageable set that he had under him, and only fit to do the laird's pleasure whatever it might be. He began, however, to think that it would make matters very easy to have the tenantry enlightened upon the subject of rent: and when an amicable agreement was presently concluded about the lease, and the blanks filled up without dispute, he said to himself that it was pleasant to have to do with reasonable people where business was in question, while their independence on other occasions was not perhaps more troublesome than the ill behavior of the ignorant.

Ella being quite of this opinion, was anxious to know something of the character of their new neighbors at the farm. As Mr. Callum said little about them, and she did not choose to inquire, she must leave it to time to satisfy her curiosity: but she augured well from Mr. Callum's expectation that they would find their rent no hardship, though it was considerably higher than Murdoch had lately paid. The furniture too, of which she obtained a sight as it was being carried up, was of a superior kind to what was often seen in Garveloch, and nearly equal to her own; so that there was hope that the family were sober and industrious at any rate, and that other virtues would show themselves as opportunity offered.

CHAPTER XII.

A WAKING DREAM.

Not a drawback to the happiness of Angus and Ella now remained, and a more cheerful family party was never seen than assembled before the cottage the next morning to arrange the few preparations necessary before the marriage, which was to take place in two days.

Angus had finally given up his charge at the farm, and received security for the payment of what was due to him out of the growing crops which had been sown and tended by him. He was now about to make the circuit of the island, and to touch at some others in the sound, to make known the time when he should take his first trip, in order that the commissions of his customers might be ready. Ronald was his companion in this excursion, from which they hoped to return by the middle of the next day, before proceeding to meet the new boat. Fergus would accompany them then to share the honor of bringing home the vessel which was to be the first regular medium of the commerce of the island; and the next morning, Ella and Archie were to be received on board and to proceed to Oban, where the marriage was to take place.

Fergus and Ella were to occupy themselves during Angus's present excursion in improving their arrangements within doors. Angus's goods had been stored in a safe place: they were now unpacked, and served not a little to ornament the dwelling and add to its conveniences. With what a light heart did Ella pursue her employments this day! How gentle was now her accustomed song, and how tender the glance she cast upon Archie, from time to time, as he followed her to watch her proceedings and make his strange remarks upon every new object he saw! Fergus waited upon them both with all the quiet heedfulness of a girl, while his manly spirit was eager to be busy upon the tossing sea.

'Ella! What can this be?' he cried, as he unpacked a bag of green baize which contained some

short tubes which seemed meant to fix into each other.—Archie immediately snatched one and looked through the ends.

'He takes it for a telescope,' said Ella, smiling. 'It is a flute; Angus told me he would play to us, some day. It is played by blowing through those holes, I believe; and not at the end, like the mouth-piece of a bag-pipe.'

Fergus tried, and succeeded in producing a tremendous screech. Archie first started, then laughed, and employed himself for the rest of the day in applying a piece of alder wood to his mouth and screeching in like manner.

'His music is as good as mine,' observed Fergus, laughing. 'I cannot think how any body can fetch pleasant music out of those holes. I like a bag-pipe far better.'

'Wait till you hear Angus play to-morrow,' said his sister. 'He tells me that he has heard some musicians play airs that would almost win the eagle from her prey.'

'I wish he were such a one,' replied Fergus. 'I would fain have an eagle within reach, and pin her carcass to our wall as Angus has done at the farm.'

'You would be a keen sportsman, Fergus, if you lived within reach of better game than wild fowl that lie still to be shot. But, come, lay aside the flute, and leave off handling your gun, if you wish to be on the steep to hail their return to-morrow. There is much to be done yet, and I have a fancy that they will be home earlier than the hour they bade us look for them.'

The boat was in earlier; but Fergus was already watching on the steep, with Ella sitting by his side.

'All well?' cried Angus, as he sprang on shore. 'Why then, every thing is well, for we shall have as much business to manage in this first trip as if our boat was bound for the port of London, instead of such a poor place as Oban.'

'A poor place!' exclaimed Ronald. 'Well, I suppose travelling abroad makes one saucy. I never saw Oban, to be sure; but I should judge from the number of things you are to be desired to buy, that almost any traffic may be carried on there. Can ye tell Ella some of the articles you will have to bring back?'

'There are more than I can remember now. One neighbor is going to try his fortune with a flock, and I am to bring over some ewes with their lambs. Then a rare housewife wants needles, and her husband hemp to make nets; and many need barley meal to make out till harvest. I am glad you are going with me, Ella, for I am to have a commission for some woman's finery that I know less how to bargain for than for sheep and hemp. I shall often have such articles in my freight, for shall women be within reach of caps and ribbons and not buy?'

'You may reckon on beginning with me,' said Ella, smiling. 'I purpose trafficking for caps.'

There was more in this to delight Angus than would have met an English ear. The Highland women wear no caps till they can assume the matronly curch with which it was now Ella's purpose to provide herself. She led the way into the dwelling to show how she and Fergus had been employed.

'You have been as busy as we, Ella; so now let us make holiday for the two hours that we are waiting for the tide. It is full soon to start again: but the better we use the tide, the sooner we shall come back for you and Archie. Where is Archie?'

'On the Storr since day break. Would ye let him hear the flute?—that is if ye can make it heard so far, for we shall not win him home while day lasts.'

Angus went out upon the beach, and his companions seated themselves round him upon the shingle; and now, how astonished was Fergus to hear what music might be brought out of a flute! Its clear sweet notes reached Archie on his rock. He came out to the mouth of his hole at the first sound, and stood intently listening while Angus played a slow air, and danced merrily when it was changed to a jig. As often as it ceased, he clapped his hands impatiently for more.

'O Angus,' cried Ella; 'ye have brought a new pleasure to Archie!' and Angus took this as it was meant,—as a strong expression of gratitude.

'How piercing the note is!' cried Ronald. 'If you played among the dells higher up, the rocks would be long in letting the music drop.'

'And if this sea were smooth water like an inland lake,' said Angus, 'I could make the people in Scarba hear me. I have heard it as far over water where there was no ripple and when not a breath was stirring.'

The lads had seldom known so serene a state of the air as this, and could not even conceive of waters that had not more or less swell.

On looking round, Ella perceived that the musician had other auditors than Archie and themselves. The tenants of the farm were peeping over the ridge behind, and the Murdochs were stationed at the point of the promontory to the left which separated their cove from Ella's. Though Angus put up his instrument they still lingered, at first hoping to hear it again, and then being curious to see the preparations for embarking.

'Take care of yourself and Archie till the morn,' said Ronald, 'and then be up with the sun,—bright may he shine!—and see us cut across the sound; and be sure ye await us at the quay, for that is where ye must get on board.'

'It will save us a circuit if we push off from the quay now,' said Fergus, 'since we have to bear down due south some way, and we can easily carry the boat over the bar.'

Angus thought the same. Just as they were hoisting the bark on their shoulders, the young Murdochs came up; Rob to ask a passage a little way down the sound, and the girls to keep Ella company for a while.

'Archie is in his merriment to day,' said one; 'he has scarce ceased dancing since he heard the music.'

'He knows what is doing now,' observed the other; 'see him climbing to the top to see them push off.'

The girls and Ella then walked slowly up the path from the beach to a point whence they might watch the boat set off, and trace it for a considerable way. It was a bright and serene afternoon; there were no rough gales abroad, and the swell of the sea was no greater than in the calmest days of that region. The air was so clear that the mountain lights and shadows were distinctly visible as their peaks rose one behind another on the eastern horizon. Within the shadow of the Storr, the water was of the deepest green, while beyond, long streaks of glittering light extended from island to island, and grew broader as the sun descended.

The little boat pushed off from the quay in good style, with two pair of oars, the three boatmen of Ella's household having waived their bonnets and cheered before they stepped in, in honor of the spectators. It was necessary to pull strongly and evenly till they should have crossed the rapid current which flowed round the Storr: but Rob, heedless of this and remembering that he had not cheered and waved his bonnet, suddenly started up, threw down his oar, destroyed the balance, and upset the boat.—What shrieks rang from rock to rock, as the bark tumbled in the current, and the rowers were borne, in spite of their struggles, down, down, far and fast by the sweeping waters! Ella clasped her hands above her head, and uttered no sound after the first shriek. Her companions ran hither and thither with loud lamentations. The people at the farm did what these girls should have done; they ran down with all speed to desire Murdoch to get out his boat.

'There's one safe!' cried Meg; 'the rock is but just above the water, but he is sitting upon it.'

'O God!' groaned Ella, 'save me from praying which it may be!'

Another soon appeared on the same point; but nothing could yet be seen of the other two.

Archie had beheld all this, and more; he could overlook Murdoch's proceedings also from his pinnacle. He was strongly wrought upon; for no one understood better the signs of emotion, whether or not he understood the cause. He acted with rapidity and strength, as if suddenly inspired by reason; but, alas! his energy could only manifest itself in the way of imitation. The moment he saw Murdoch's boat hastily launched, he ran down to his 'floating place,' as he called it, rolled his cask into the water and got into it. Murdoch alone saw him standing up and waving his bonnet, before he reached the eddy, which could not but be fatal to him.—The cask came up again,—empty—and floated round the point, as Archie had no doubt foreseen it would, and at length arrived within Fergus's reach, and was the means of saving him. He clung to it, not aware of the nature of the friendly support, till taken up by Murdoch's boat. The two who had reached the rock were Angus and Ronald; and Rob had had his wits so sharpened by the plunge, as to perceive that he had better not leave hold of the oar he had clung to at first. He too was taken up; so that Ella believed that all had come safe out of this awful peril,—she alone being ignorant of what had happened at the Storr. When she joined her

brothers on the beach, they stood aloof a moment from her embrace, with countenances in which there was as much of solemn compassion as of grief. Angus was down upon his face; Murdoch alone uttered a few broken words. It was some time before she could comprehend or would believe what had happened, and then she was the only one who retained her self-command.

An expression of unspeakable anguish passed over her countenance as Fergus mourned that he had been saved by Archie's loss.

'Nay, Fergus,' said she, 'let us leave it to Him who guides us, to show whose life had best be taken and whose left. God knows I strove for this before I knew His pleasure; and now that we do know it, let us question neither the purposes nor the means.—Let us devoutly bless Him that you are here.'

While Angus took her home, the neighbors dispersed in search of the body, which could not, however, be found, and was supposed to have been carried by the current far out of reach. When all had gone home for the night, and her companions had for some time retired to hide their grief, or to forget it for a while in sleep, Ella stole out alone, and passed the night among the rocks,—a night whose natural beauty was worthy to succeed to that of the day that was gone. It was light; and this it was which, giving the faint hope of recovering the body, took Ella abroad. The red lights of the west had not wholly vanished when the grey dawn began to glimmer, while, in mid sky, the stars twinkled as if in rivalry of the sparkles below. The sea was, as it often is in that region, highly luminous; and as Ella sat watching the eddy within which Archie had sunk, her eye marked, and not without pleasure even now, the gleam which broke on the crest of every wave, and was scattered in showers of sparkles as far as the spray could reach.

There she was found by Angus at day-break.

'You have not been in his cave?' said he.

'No,' replied Ella. 'I will go there first when you and the lads have left me.'

'Left you! and when will that be?'

'In a few hours, I hope,' she replied, smiling. 'I must see that Archie is still honored by being kept apart from that in which he had no share. The business of our days went on without him while he lived, and it shall go on now, if it were only to show that he bore no part in it. You must perform your promises to our neighbors, Angus, and discharge their business, and then you can come back to me with an easy mind.'

'I will,' replied Angus; 'and I will not ask you to go with me this time. It is for you to say whether there is cause for your remaining behind.'

'There is; this once,—not longer, Angus. I cannot give up the hope of laying Archie beneath the cross beside my father. This will either be done or given up before your next voyage, and then I will go.'

For some hours of the morning of their intended marriage-day, Angus and Ella were wandering along the shores engaged in the most melancholy search in which eye and heart can be employed. At length Angus pointed to a sign which could scarcely be misunderstood. He had observed an osprey winging its flight for some distance over the sea, and now perceived that it was joined by another, and that both were hovering as if about to stoop. Endeavoring to escape them with cries, he hastened onwards, followed by Ella, for some distance towards the south-west, and succeeded in finding the object of their search. Archie lay, as if asleep, on a beach of fine sand, still grasping the bosom of his plaid which contained the gathered treasures of the day.—Long were those weeds and feathers kept as memorials of Archie's pleasures: they were Ella's only hoard.

Angus returned from his first voyage with the lads in safety, and in time to lay Archie's head in the grave. This done, Ella acknowledged that no duty remained to prevent her fulfilling all her promises. She accompanied him, the next week, to Oban, and returned his wife.

Having illustrated the leading principles which regulate the PRODUCTION of Wealth, we proceed to consider the laws of its DISTRIBUTION.

The classes concerned in production are (as we have seen) two, Laborers and Capitalists; but the latter class is usually divided into two, viz.—

Those who hold in possession the natural agents of production, as Land-owners; and

Those who employ these natural agents, as Farmers, or others who apply capital to land or water.

Of these three classes, among whom distribution takes place,

Laborers	receive their share as Wages,
Capitalists	as Profits,
Land-owners	as Rent.

We proceed first to Rent, for reasons which will appear when we treat of Wages and Profits; and, for the sake of clearness, shall confine our Summary to the explanation of Land-Rent.

Summary of Principles illustrated in this volume.

The total Rent paid by a farmer includes real Rent, and much besides; viz. the profits of the capital laid out by the land-owner upon the estate.

Real RENT is that which is paid to the land-owner for the use of the original, indestructible powers of the soil.

Land has these powers in different degrees.

The most fertile being all appropriated, and more produce wanted, the next best soil is brought into cultivation; then land of the third degree, and so on, till all is tilled that will repay tillage.

An unequal produce being yielded by these different lands, the surplus return of all above the lowest goes to the land-owner in the form of Rent.

The same thing happens when repeated applications of capital are made to the same land for the sake of increasing its productiveness. The produce which remains over the return to the least productive application of capital, goes to the land-owner in the form of rent.

RENT, therefore, consists of that part of the return, made to the more productive portions of capital, by which it exceeds the return made to the least productive portion.

New lands are not tilled, and capital is not employed for a less return, unless the produce will pay the cost of production.

A rise of prices, therefore, creates, and is not created by, Rent.

When more capital is employed in agriculture, new land is tilled, a further outlay is made on land already tilled; and thus also Rent arises from increase of capital.

When capital is withdrawn from agriculture, inferior, i. e. the most expensive soils, are let out of cultivation; and thus Rent falls.

A rise of Rent is, therefore, a symptom, and not a cause, of wealth.

The tendency of Rent is, therefore, to rise for ever in an improving country.—But there are counter-acting causes.

Art increases production beyond the usual returns to capital laid out: prices fall in proportion to the abundance of the supply, and Rent declines.

Improved facilities for bringing produce to market, by increasing the supply, cause prices to fall and Rent to decline.

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